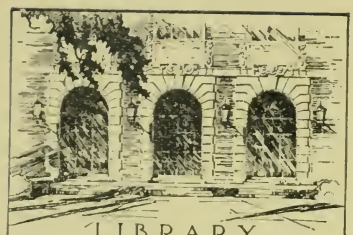

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CHARLIE THORNHILL;

OR,

THE DUNCE OF THE FAMILY.

CHARLIE THORNHILL;

OR,

THE DUNCE OF THE FAMILY.

A Novel.

BY

CHARLES CLARKE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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CHARLIE THORNHILL.

CHAPTER I.

EXPLANATORY.

"Ich führe das nur an, Euch auf die Spur
Zu bringen. Stetzt euch selber nun zusammen."

SCHILLER, *Macb.*

DURING this time Burke was not idle. His career had been chequered since last we met him. Sudden suspicions of his honest dealings had been followed by heavy losses, the estrangement of friends, and the attacks of enemies. He was observed to be uneasy, and absent; his once flourishing business became less respectable and less lucrative. Some transactions connected with the turf, and some heavy speculations in the money market, helped him on his

downward course. His vulgarity no longer stood for honesty, his brusquerie for talent. He quitted Ireland for ever, comparatively a ruined man—if so great a scoundrel could be ruined in a world where there are so many fools. He had not been very unsuccessful, however, at the various gambling tables to which he resorted: he only felt his inferiority in private play, where his grossness of manner and vulgarity of appearance were against him. When he accidentally met with Kildonald a few months previous to their last conversation, he was not too blind to see that he would be a most valuable ally.

Lately he had begun to suspect that his hold upon Kildonald was looser than it had been. But Kildonald was one of those men who could not face want; and Burke, however unjustly, held the purse-strings in his grasp. Impaired as his own fortunes were, he contrived to live well and ostentatiously, wherever he was. Strange to say, whether with ulterior views, or

from fear of detection should his victim be driven too hard, he also contrived to supply Kildonald with a pittance at intervals, and with some regularity. This was always supposed to be a portion of the Kildonald rent-roll, the rest finding its way into Mr. Burke's pocket in the form of certain heavy charges upon the property for moneys advanced and never paid, and for which Mr. Burke still held the acknowledgments. These were presumed to be in the handwriting of the late Kildonald.

Another force besides the fear of want, however, had up to the present kept the sufferer quiet, and induced him at least to offer no strong opposition to the schemes of rascality of his countryman. Now Burke was positively generous. He came frequently to Frankfort—always, apparently with inquiries for his old acquaintance. He did not always come empty-handed. He appeared to force on the sick man's wife a more liberal allowance. He talked boldly and blusteringly of the pleasures of doing good, as the roar

of the wild beast before an attack. The wife and the mother's heart was gained. Hubert Kildonald was home from Düsseldorf, and Burke was loud in his praises of his fine figure and his noble appearance. Perhaps his admiration was sincere: for the boy was all he said, and more too. The mother's culture had not been thrown away.

There was another, too, whom he had seen once or twice, but whom his bold, bad gaze had sent blushing from the room. This was Kathleen. She was just bursting into womanhood, and, though not the daughter of Norah, she had so much acquired her look, her manner, her softness, and simplicity, that the face was imperceptibly being impressed with a great likeness. But she was brighter, gayer, and less regular in feature than Norah: she had wit, intelligence, and great apprehension; she had a well-cultivated mind as far as her seclusion would allow it to be so. Her eyes were large and lustrous; her hair abundant and glistening, of a dark brown; her

nose only piquantly *retroussée;* her mouth full and dimpling, not very small, but very characteristic of her country; her figure was perfection —not tall and stately, nor drooping, as the manner of some is, but light, active, and round, of middle height; her very step denoted vigour of purpose, the companion of high health and physical development. She had a charming smile, and was an impersonation of dimples and blushes. Such was Kathleen Kildonald at eighteen years of age.

The winter was gone: Kildonald's health was better, but he had grown prematurely old. He had scarcely quitted the house in the cold weather, but an early spring and the pleasant sunshine of a brighter day than usual strengthened him. He began to move like himself again. He walked more uprightly, and he was beginning to be as careful of his dress as heretofore. Norah had nursed him well; and, in her own views of economy, managed to afford him many comforts and some luxuries. Burke seemed to have left

the neighbourhood for a time. Letters from England had arrived during his illness which had interested both him and Norah; and though they contained some intelligence that could scarcely be called cheerful, it relieved him of a great anxiety. He learnt the death of his unhappy son George, who had, at least, never borne his name, whatever his title to it; and the wreck of a vessel in which George's mother had sailed for Australia, and in which all on board perished, left him free from a clog which had long galled him.

When Kildonald was a young man under age, he had fallen in love with a beautiful girl much below him in rank, and of no very good character, called Mary Connor. A secret marriage, through fear of his father, had been arranged between them, and George and Kathleen had been the results of this connection. Whether by his own neglect, or the woman's depravity, she had proved false to him. She left him with her son, then a boy of four or five years of age, and sunk by slow

degrees into nothing more nor less than a common tramp. The girl had been preserved from a similar fate by accident. She had been educated by his friends as a child; and when he was married again to his present wife she was taken to his home, and had the same affectionate care bestowed upon her as his son, the only fruit of his second marriage. By the management of Burke, his first wife, still alive, had been bought off by the payment of periodical instalments; and caring nothing for Kildonald, and fearing the loss of her means of enjoyment, moderate as they were, she had felt it to her interest to keep scrupulously to her promise of secrecy. It was this power which gave Burke his influence over Kildonald. The fear of exposure, whilst in the world, had made him a willing instrument in the hands of the lawyer; and though time and distance, and his absence from society so long, had weakened the bond, still the pain that the knowledge would have inflicted on Norah, whom he sincerely loved, as far as his selfish nature was capable of loving,

made him anxiously fearful of an exposure. The death of mother and son so far lessened the chance of detection that he felt almost at ease on this score. The only remaining evidence was that of Burke himself; and although he would not have provoked it heedlessly, he felt himself at liberty to assume an independence of his tyranny. The question of the money and estate he now thought might be submitted to the lawyers with some hope of successful issue.

The summer passed slowly on. The pittance forwarded from time to time served to keep them from want, and to purchase some luxuries needed for a convalescent. Norah was, as ever, patient, unflagging in kindness, and self-sacrificing to the whims and caprices of the sick man. He recovered slowly. His native air was recommended. He answered, drily enough, that he "didn't think his native air would agree" with him. Kathleen was increasing in beauty daily: all that could be spared for the purpose was being spent on her education; and amongst other advantages, good

instruction is cheap enough in the Hanse Towns. It had been almost decided that she should seek employment in the City by way of meeting the increasing expenses.

Illness had much altered Kildonald. He began to think again; and a weakness, physical as well as mental, had had a salutary effect on the *morale*. Many circumstances assisted to produce this effect; for the wind is not the less there, even though the mill may stand still. It is not sufficient that abuses should only be destroyed: the moral tone must be modified.

Autumn had arrived, and with it might be expected the usual locust herd at the German baths. It affected Frankfort much. The English, Russian, Viennese, Parisian (I mention the two latter municipally, for I do not mean Austrians nor French), all who had lost money, and would retrench, and many who had a few thousand francs to spare, took the place *en route*. The Hotel de Russie was always crowded: and the celebrated Johanisberger, at seven thalers the bottle, seemed

to be almost a widow's cruse. It was always going. In due time Burke re-appeared.

He was not long in seeking the humble street in which Kildonald lived. He had the same game in view as last autumn, and his previous disappointment only sharpened his appetite. He would, and might perhaps, have found another and more tractable accomplice; but he could have found few so *habile*, so fitted for his purpose, and none to whom he could apply without exposing much that he would rather confine to as few as possible. It was an object, therefore, to make a favourable impression: and he had paved his way by some pecuniary advances more liberal than usual.

"You have been seriously ill: you don't recover as you should," said he, after a few ordinary expressions. "You must take rooms at Homburg, or Wiesbaden, Mrs. Kildonald. Have you no influence? It's not fair of you for Kildonald to insist on looking so old." Burke was self-satisfied.

"But we're not so young as we were, Mr.

Burke," replied she, with a rather woe-begone smile, "and he's not so easily persuaded to move as he was." Mrs. Kildonald would have moved into a worse place than purgatory to have relieved him; and she regarded both the places mentioned in that light.

"The baths are fuller than ever; but you'll, maybe, get rooms a little way from the town, which will be better for your husband. He'll get some fresh air and a little society." Here Burke appealed to Kildonald himself, who sat nervously turning in his arm-chair. Now and then a spasm seemed to pass across his face, and a peevish "pish!" was the only answer he gave to each new suggestion.

The room in which they sat looked uncomfortable for an invalid. A strip of carpet did duty for a whole one; the polished boards underneath were very clean, and very cold. The stove was not yet in the room. The piano occupied one side, or rather end; and the size of it, and the old-fashioned, but handsome, cornices, gave it an

air of cheerless grandeur. Kildonald sat at a table, on which were many letters and papers. Of books there were none but a few of the Tauchnitz edition of English novels, and some German and French school-books, which belonged to his daughter. After a little time Mrs. Kildonald left the room.

"Letters from the ould country?" asked Burke.

"They are," replied Kildonald, with a cold and distant manner.

"They bring no good news, I'll go bail. There's nothing but ill luck there; and as to that estate, faith, I'm entirely out o' pocket by it this two years." Burke spoke deprecatingly.

"It's a misfortune that my family has been accustomed to longer than that. It would be satisfactory to know what does become of the rent. The tenants must be in clover." And here the speaker turned round and looked Burke in the face.

"I own I—don't—quite—understand, Kildonald."

"Probably not, Mr. Burke; but it's hard to find comprehension——"

"Oh! here's Mrs. Kildonald just in time," said Burke, as the door opened, and she and Kathleen entered. The latter, however, seeing her father engaged, stepped back, and Mrs. Kildonald crossed the room, and went out by an opposite door. They were again alone; but the interruption enabled Burke to evade the former discussion, and he continued: "But come, you want something to do. Your health will be the better for the change. *I* want money, Kildonald; and if I want it, you will want it."

"Then I must continue to want it if you depend upon my assistance; but, at least, you are in receipt of my property."

"At present I'm in receipt of nothing. I've lost my last florin; but I've borrowed a hundred. Share it with me. Come to Wiesbaden. I've a

goose there that lays golden eggs." And Burke chuckled.

"And I'm to be the decoy-duck. You assign me an honourable post."

"Decoy-duck? Nonsense! Come, come, be reasonable. You were not so particular once. We've rowed in the same boat too long to upset it now. It won't be many years before we shall be doing a little racing here: the foreigners are very keen about it. It will be well to keep your hand in whenever you get a chance."

During this speech Kildonald had slowly risen: he appeared to find a difficulty, and sat down again, whilst a bright flush lighted up his pale cheeks, and his still handsome eyes nearly flashed fire. As Burke, however, terminated with the allusion to his hand, he rose suddenly, and resting his left hand upon the table, he drew the right suddenly from his bosom. "Hand, did you say, hand!" and he held up, to the astonished sight of his visitor, a withered and useless limb. "There, sir! is that a hand to deal a card, or a

blow, to *sauter le coup*, or pull a horse? Is that, sir—answer me—a hand to help you in your tricks of *leger-de-main*, and to transfer gold from one pocket to another? Would to God it had withered before it ever lent its aid to your schemes of villany and fraud—the hand that has made me an exile and a byword! Ay, look at it! ye may well stare! Would to God it had been employed in digging the acres it has striven to secure, but which have slipped from its grasp, as if it had always been thus weak and powerless! Look at it! and if prayers could restore it, its first act should be to avenge itself upon the cowardly miscreant who fattens on the blood of his victims! I know you, sir; and I'll unmask you." Whilst he was yet speaking, Norah had opened the door, but he had not heeded her. She stood still, and he continued: "I fear you not, now. Do your worst. Your secret is worthless. Where are your proofs, sir—your proofs—and your word—the word of a robber: who believes it?"

"Oh! Mr. Burke, Mr. Burke! heed him not:

it is his health—his irritation. He does not know what he is saying." And Norah stepped between them as Burke's face assumed the passions of a demon about to spring upon his prey. "Leave him, sir, to me—to his wife—I beg," as the other stood motionless with passion and surprise.

As Burke turned to leave the room, Kildonald threw himself into the arms of Norah, sobbing—"Yes, my wife, my wife!" and sank fainting upon the floor.

Burke was already gone; and as he walked slowly down the wide, but dark staircase towards the street, he clenched his hand and muttered, "He shall pay dearly for this! but, first of all, how much does he know?"

CHAPTER II.

"MAN OVERBOARD!"

"Omne animi vitium tanto confectius in se
Crimen habet, quanto major qui peccat, habetur."—
Juv. viii. 140.

As BURKE closed the door of the house in a narrow street between the Cathedral and the Schnur Gasse, Charles Thornhill threw open the folding-door of a large banking-house in the Zeil, and took his way to the left in that confident manner which proclaimed him perfectly at home in the city of Frankfort. Englishman as he was, and looked (for he reserved to himself the sacred privilege of a clean chin), he was neither looking for the Hotel de Russie nor examining his "Murray," or foreign "Bradshaw." He was not in search of the Juden Gasse, nor even of the Ariadne, and no *valet de place* addressed him with the hope of employ-

ment. He walked sturdily and steadily forward with a rather business-like air, and attracted no notice from any one, excepting that universal admiration which is given to size when accompanied by grace and good looks. It is almost two years since we had anything to do with Charlie. He has employed them well; and with the exception of a short visit to England on business in June last, which he made one of pleasure also, he had stuck to his work with a perseverance which confirmed the judgment of his friend, Palmer. He was about to cross the street to his "mid-day" dinner at the house of his chief, M. Meyerheim.

"Dornhills, by Jove! my goot fellow, how are you?" The inquiry proceeded from our old acquaintance, the Baron Hartzstein. Having had a very successful season in England, he was in a central position for a little foreign gambling.

"Well, Baron," said Charlie, who was always amused with his friend, though by no means

holding him in great respect; "tired of England?"

"England for me is London, and London is gone away."

"That is to say, come abroad: and who's here? Who has lost his money, or his wife, or his digestion? You can get them all back somewhere in the Black Forest, or on the Berg Strasse."

"Yees! you have right. And you—you go to Baden, or Homburg?" the baron not conceiving that any of his acquaintance could be at Frankfort for any other purpose.

"Neither: you know I'm a banker now—in Meyerheim's house: delighted to hold your winnings for you, Baron: safer with us than you."

"Ah! I see: you will hold the money what your brother spends. But why not go to drink the waters? Waters is very goot."

"Wine's better; besides, what would our clients say?"

"Say! nothing—no! My friend, Baron Gold-

stock, the great banker of Vienna—bless my soul, Dornhills!—he's always breaking the bank; and then he breaks my sleep. I live in his hotel, and am not so lucky: so I go to bed, and at two in the morning he wakes us all up to tell us the news; and the next day all the world send their moneys to Goldstock and Co., of Vienna."

"I think I should close my account. Have you been long in Frankfort?"

"Last night only. I have been in Wiesbaden. There is an Englishman there, a man with a scarlet face and whiskers, who plays very high—and he wins: one Burke."

"Burke, Burke," said Charlie, soliloquising: "where have I heard that name?" and Charlie rubbed his nose, and smoothed his chin, a system of mnemonics cheap, if not efficient.

"Yes, Burke! He is a friend of one Donald; but Donald I never see: he was to come to dinner, many times, but Providence befriended him. You know I am strong. But I have seen you yesterday."

"Really! and where?"

"At the Thier-Garten: and, come, Dornhills, who was your pretty friend?"

"Some German lady, probably; but I forget at this moment."

"No, no! not of my Landsleute: it gives no such pretty women out of England. You cannot dress, and you have no manner. You are not *rusé*, nor *spirituel*, nor *bien ganté:* you sing not, and you dance almost on what you call all-fours; but—ah! Gott bewahr—you have lovely women, and long-legged horses. I could add some of both to my collection: but come, you will not tell me?"

"Yes, I will, Baron," said Charlie, who had no great fear of the Austrian's powers of fascination. "That was the governess of the two little girls, and the other was Madame Meyerheim; but I think she sat down whilst we walked about."

"Oh! the governess!" and here the baron meant to be intelligible. "What! of my good friend Meyerheim? I must bank with Meyer-

heim and Co. I shall keep a large balance. Madame shall ask me to her evenings. Come, Dornhills, you shall introduce me at once."

"But I am not going back to the bank at present. I am going home to dinner. I am become quite a German."

"So much the better: you shall present me at once to madame."

"No! Baron—that's out of the question. She doesn't receive."

"Then take care of yourself. You are jealous. You know I am sceptic about women. They are all bad, that is, good, when there is a 'rapport.' You believe in magnetism; mesmerism. No?"

"I believe in honour among men, and chastity among women. And if your intentions are as serious as you would have me think, don't forget that this is an Englishwoman. Adieu," and Charlie crossed the street.

The baron continued his walk: and the beautiful English girl, whom he had seen with Thornhill, became a settled idea. It took its place

with dice and the Derby winner. Nothing of this sort presented difficulties to Baron Hartzstein.

"Mr. Thornhill," said Madame Meyerheim, in German, "we almost gave you up: we are sorry to have begun, but Miss Donald and the children are going out after dinner, and we were anxious not to be late. The band plays at Mainlust to-day." Charlie apologised good-humouredly, and took his seat opposite to Miss Donald, by the side of little Bertha; Mr. Meyerheim was at the other end of the table.

"Where's Heinrich?" said Mr. Meyerheim, looking up from his soup.

"Gone for a ride on one of Mr. Thornhill's horses," said mamma.

"You'll make him quite English; you are too kind to him: and he'll want to go to London, whenever we lose you."

"I shall be glad to help him, whenever I can," said Charles Thornhill; "but I don't know that I shall be wanted in London this year at

least—but we must talk English now for the children."

And accordingly they did so.

Mr. Meyerheim himself was the best and mildest of continental bankers. He was more simple than a child, which is strange when we take into consideration his knowledge of business, and the opportunities presented him of studying rascality in its happiest garb. He was one of those good men, who, from the deep well of worldly hardness, avarice, and scepticism, saw nothing but the blue sky above him. He loved Thornhill because he was honest and true. He did not know how he found it out; but he felt that it was so. Charlie was originally like him. The clay, the humanity of both was the same. Associations had altered them, or acted more upon one than the other. The impressions had been different, and stronger. No person could be less like Charlie's male friends than M. Meyerheim.

Madame was an excellent person. Stout, fair,

with good hair and blue eyes. The best housekeeper in the world: a practical cook, and not ashamed of it. Admirable housewife; who religiously collected the table napkins after dinner, and ordered them to be pressed and put away for the morrow. A reader, and great philosopher on the science of the education of women; a little speculative, which was to the credit of the Bourse; it however never practically developed itself. She often wondered why her husband had not made his fortune in one coup. She was an intense admirer of him for all the excellences which he did not possess. She was kind, amiable, economical, and a match-maker: and as little like Charlie's female world as a woman could be.

"You are going too soon, Mr. Thornhill: another glass of Marcobrunner?"

"Work, Mrs. Meyerheim: your husband sets me a good example."

"But it is a model you have improved upon," said he.

Charlie went at five o'clock to Mainlust. He found the children and Miss Donald. He smoked his cigar, and chatted cheerfully with them, until he was joined by Baron Hartzstein.

That gentleman joined in the conversation with an indomitable energy which repelled all coldness. He would take no denial; and though not formally presented, he made the acquaintance of the pretty governess by force of eloquence. Charlie was not a talker, so the baron had it all to himself.

The following evening the banker's lady had an "at home." A few friends dropped in, and Charlie remained at home to help to be entertained. About nine o'clock a very gay gentleman in a white uniform, Comte Degenfield, had the honour to present his friend, the Baron Hartzstein of Vienna.

London society had not much changed since Charlie Thornhill had left England. Sir Frederick and Lady Marston dispensed their usual hospitalities in the country, and partici-

pated in the pleasures of legislation in the town. Lady Elizabeth Montagu Mastoden was as great, as vulgar, and as good as ever, and continued to revere the mighty master whom she had married. Robinson Brown, père et fils, were as gorgeous as ever in their separate lines: the former the solemn and gloomy larva, the vital principle of the latter, the useless and tawdry butterfly. There were the same balls, and the same people at them night after night. The same opera, and the same singers. The Rotten Row more rotten than ever. The same Newmarket, Epsom, Ascot, and Goodwood, and the same horses, four years old instead of three. A few men, supposed to be good, were gone, gone to the bad: others, long supposed to be bad, were still to the good. Wilson Graves had never been heard of more; his servant was amusing himself in the Penitentiary. Lord Carlingford told every one he was ruined, and gone to Rome to retrench. The same lady headed his establishment, and with the excep-

tion of his Melton expenses, it was difficult to believe him. There were drawing-rooms, and levees, as usual; and a few new scandals. Here and there really a man or woman overboard, but the great vessel of the state passed on its way. Excepting by Mint, Chalkstone, Palmer, and Co., Charlie was nearly forgotten. Tom still kept his head to the wind, and breasted the opinions and the inuendos of the British public. And what did it say of him? That he was almost ruined: Impossible! Listen, however, to excellent authority. Scene, Punter's, at 2 A.M.

"What's Thornhill lost this season?"

"Five and twenty thousand."

"You don't say so:" the speaker sighed, that he had not twenty-five thousand to lose.

"Fact: Thornhills is mortgaged all over. Came from old Stamp the lawyer: Tom goes to Como at the end of the season."

"Sorry for it: he's a capital fellow, and always stands a rattler on a good thing. Is there any

truth about him and Dacre's eldest daughter?" Here the speaker looked at his own person, boots especially, by the flaming gas-light.

"Not a word: the old lady did her best, but caught the younger brother, which wouldn't do at all. I should think they're sorry they let him go now: he's the best spec of the two. He's gone into Mint and Chalkstone's house, and he'll have all his uncle's money." *Magna est veritas et prævalebit.* Mrs. Dacre was, and had been, in piteous plight. Both husband and daughters thwarted her schemes and ruined her hopes. Mr. Dacre would not see the miseries of a match with the younger son; and supported Alice in her semi-rejection of the elder. Tom Thornhill with a clear unencumbered estate was the man of his county. Tom Thornhill deeply dipt, with a reputation growing worse, and a passion for gambling, which not even the heaven-born beauty of Alice Dacre could subdue; Tom Thornhill, of Thornhills, unable to live on his estate; with the place coming to the hammer,

and his affairs in the hand of Stamp, the great family lawyer and agent to half the nobility; Tom Thornhill, on the steps of Crockford's, cursing his fate, or sitting dolefully in his rooms in the Albany, was a different man to the Tom Thornhill the world beheld at St. James's; at the Clubs; at Tattersall's; on the Heath: or in the field. Cheerful, generous, charming; no man saw the invisible spectre, that walked arm and arm with its prey.

One only, and she most interested in never seeing it: Alice Dacre. From the earliest day of their intimacy she had seen it all. It was the vice that most shocked her, as incurable. And in spite of it all, no sooner was she assured of his preference than she loved him. And then she hoped against hope. He surely cared less for play. He was more in society, less at the card-table. She saw him everywhere: where was his time for the indulgence of this fatal passion? Surely it was *chassé* by another and a purer influence. Alice had great faith in her father; and Mr. Dacre

deceived neither himself nor his daughter. Mrs. Dacre would have deceived both. So Tom Thornhill proposed in form, and was formally refused.

The misfortune of such a case is this: that no one can bell the cat. No one told Tom Thornhill why he was rejected by the woman that manifestly loved him. Peasants would have known the truth: but it's not the way of the great world. So he turned and went away sorrowing; but bitter. She was capricious, cold, incomprehensible. At Gilsland he was an idol, debased, broken, prostrate, but he was an idol still.

And then Alice grew sad and thoughtful; and her eyes grew dim, and her figure more pliant: she was evidently bowed. And she sought not counsel, but love, from Edith; and the tree began to be supported by the tendrils that had clung to it in earlier times.

There had been a grand ball at St. James's—the last of the season. The Dacres were returning towards Grosvenor Street. Near the top of St. James's Street the crowd of carriages

had become great, and a dead stoppage ensued. The place was alive with gas, illuminations, and people: it was as light as day. The girls were looking anxiously at the crowd, which scarcely separated to let their horses through, when they heard two young men of their acquaintance beneath the carriage window, in close conversation :—

"No, no: it was about a card, I tell you; they were playing piquet, and he laid him five thousand to one. I think that fellow Harlington took an unfair advantage, as Tom threw down his cards, considering it a certainty. However, what was to be done? He wrote him a cheque for the money, and wouldn't hear of a drawn game. Thornhills must go, and it has been in the family ever since James the First."

"Charles the Second," said Sir Herbert Cardstone, whose baronetage dated from the former monarch, and who was a little tenacious of any unjust encroachment on the privileges of that most pedantic and eccentric king. "What a

charming place it is! I should like to become——" At this moment his companion caught sight of the Dacres' carriage, and stopped the conversation abruptly.

Alice looked up, and at that moment, on the steps of the most notorious gambling-house in town, she saw the haggard face of her rejected lover: his whole air was one of dejection and faded excitement. His handsome features were drawn, and his eyes had assumed an unearthly size.

He was looking without seeing, laughing without a smile, whilst his companions talked rapidly. She had not seen him for some weeks, and he was aged ten years. Edith followed her sister's eyes, and as she took her cold hand in hers, she felt the silent tears drop noiselessly upon her naked wrist. From that day they talked no more of the ruined gambler. By the end of the season, Thornhills was in the market, and its owner was alone at Como.

About the same time Charles Thornhill sent for an English groom. He got the next thing to it, an Irish one; and his name was Daly.

CHAPTER III.

A GLIMPSE AT THE PAST.

"Justum ac tenacem propositi virum," &c., &c.
HORACE, *Odes* iii. 3.

CHARLIE's life at Frankfort continued to be exceedingly pleasant. He was one of those men who, without any personal regard for comforts or luxuries, had lived in society where such things become a second nature. He wore good clothes without knowing or attaching the smallest importance to it. He liked good dinners without caring to go in search of them. He rode good horses, and he expected his saddles and bridles to be well turned out; but it never occurred to him that they were so. I think, if Charlie Thornhill had been born in another rank of life, he might have been a sloven: he was now only indifferent, and it

gave him a very high-caste appearance. There were few men of his age altogether better looking, and few so utterly free from personal vanity.

To persons who understand German society I need hardly explain that the domestic comforts, the manners, and the *ménage* are very different from those of the same class in England. M. Meyerheim had with difficulty been persuaded to receive the *employé* from his correspondents in England into his house. He was well off, had every comfort, and declined, for a long time, on the score of anticipated fastidiousness. Private friendship for Roger Palmer at length prevailed, who was anxious that his nominee should have the full benefit of a good commercial training, and do credit to his discernment whenever he should be recalled to London. The arrangement was made for one twelvemonth. At the end of that time M. Meyerheim himself placed his rooms further at Charlie's disposal for as long a period as he

should feel it convenient. This was too flattering to be overlooked; and, though Charlie Thornhill decided upon removing to some commodious rooms within a few doors of the Meyerheims, it strengthened his intimacy and enabled him to regard his old quarters as a home. In fact, he lived as much in the one house as the other.

I am obliged to admit a truth which, I hope, may not militate against Charlie. He was attracted to the Meyerheims not altogether by his admiration for Madame, who was as remarkable for her good pastry as for her beauty, nor yet by his sincere regard for Monsieur, whom he saw daily in his official capacity on the other side of the street, but by the beauty and grace of his countrywoman, Kathleen Donald (as she was called in the family), and in whom he felt an undefinable interest. Something drew him towards her. Probably her helpless condition. Enough was known of her to conjure up an obscure and dingy home: parents, probably

vulgar, certainly living in poverty or disgrace: her expatriation assuredly necessary from some cause or other, unconnected with herself. To a man of Charlie's age the self-assumed protection of a beautiful girl is always dangerous, however delicately paraded; and it is seldom that either escape from the fire unscathed: never both. Strange to say, however, Charlie never thought of her without associating her with Edith Dacre. "Ah!" said he to himself, "how I wish Edith Dacre could see her; she's just the sort of girl she would like."

And perhaps he was right. She was a very pretty girl indeed—simple-minded, but clever; imaginative; warm-hearted; Irish; attractive herself, and easily attracted by kindness and attention from others. Charles Thornhill saw all this, and he saw its dangers to her. He had been long enough on the Continent to know the general want of principle of most foreigners. He saw the girl flattered by the attentions of Hartzstein, and he had difficulty in persuading

himself that his interference would be quite disinterested. There was a great deal of truth in Charlie.

As occasion offered he had been two or three times to England. When there his visits had been chiefly with his intimate friends, the Marstons, his mother, and Tom at Thornhills, Roger Palmer, of course, and to his uncle, who always received him with the greatest affection. Henry Thornhill was beginning to show age. He was not the cheerful bachelor that rumour gave him credit for being. He was unostentatious to a degree, lived very substantially well, and gave his friends the best dinner and wine that could be put before them. But he had no luxuries for himself: a simple brougham, and a good hack of the cob sort. People thought it odd in a man of his temperament and antecedents: but he kept his own counsel; and the most that could be said was, that he was laying up a good purse for his nephew.

Charlie's relation with the Dacres was not

altogether a satisfactory one. It was scarcely an engagement; and yet no two people could be more conscious of this position towards each other than Edith Dacre and he. This is not very uncommon in society when circumstances tend to render a positive betrothal imprudent, and a positive rejection cruel. Even Mrs. Dacre was but flesh and blood: and parents are not all so hard-hearted as the world makes out. It is damaging to the girl; but she would probably think herself ill used if the silken chain were snapped asunder, and utter liberty were restored to her. Like the home-bred bird, she would but perish in the wilderness when she essayed to stray.

It was evident to our hero that Tom's career had been madly reckless of late. So much he learnt from the Marstons. Lady Marston indeed spoke of his rejection by Alice Dacre as the turning-point of his life. "He was too good, Charlie, to be turned adrift on such a stream," said she. "I'm not one of those who

like experiments upon *roués*, but your brother is a man who might have been guided by Alice Dacre : he wanted delicate treatment—an arm of iron with a hand of spun silk ; and if ever I saw the woman, Alice Dacre is the one."

Charlie knew what she said was true, and grieved over it sincerely. He had lived in such a world that it never entered his head that Alice had a reason for her refusal beyond want of affection. He hardly understood this ; but the rejection of such a man as Tom, upon principle, never occurred to him as a possible creed at Gilsland. Charlie did not understand Alice.

During a visit to Sir Frederick Marston some conversation led to the opening of a subject which had a mysterious charm for Charlie,—the possibility of bringing to punishment the murderer of his father, and the ascertaining of the facts connected with the Kildonald property. One remarkable trait in his character was " tenacity " to a purpose. He was slow in adopting

views or suggestions. Once adopted, he held to them with a steadiness remarkable in everything but an Englishman and a bull-dog.

The facts are simple enough. Sir Frederick took great interest in his farms, and, holding some grass land in his own hands, was in the habit of superintending the haymaking himself. As he rode round his fields, or strolled about with Lady Marston, he recognised again and again certain Irishmen whom he had engaged from year to year, and who, as a mark of grateful remembrance, brought a trifle or two as a present to his honour and the lady. Not unfrequently a couple of bottles of Irish whisky such as even Sir Frederick's cellar could not produce, or a bit of Limerick lace of wonderful workmanship, which had been wrought expressly for the occasion Lady Marston took much notice of these poor people, and did what she could to make them comfortable in the neighbouring village during the hay harvest on her husband's

land. There's a great deal of good in the great world of which the little world wots not.

Not long before the time of which I am writing, a poor fellow called Peter Donovan had been taken ill on the Marston estate, and died. He had been uneasy as his end drew near, and a Roman Catholic priest, who had been sent for from the nearest town, had failed to make him quite easy under the circumstances in which he was placed. He was still very anxious to see Lady Marston once more. Now, Lady Marston was a fastidious person in all things connected with personal comfort, and no fonder of a peasant's dying chamber than you or I, or any one of my politest readers. But Lady Marston was a woman as well as a lady, and no more to be daunted by foul smells and wretched sights than Florence Nightingale, and some thousands of women all over the world, when the strong light of duty beckoned her to come on. By the time she reached the dying man his mind had become weakened and his speech incoherent.

He muttered some thanks, and his happiness in seeing her, and then with a strong effort proceeded to make what might have been a confession, but for his evident intention that it should be acted upon. Lady Marston's mind was easily led back to a time which had never been forgotten by her or her husband. She now heard a confused account from the dying man of one Burke, and the Kildonald property; of certain forgeries; of an old man, a former clerk to the aforesaid Burke; of his own brother, Michael Donovan; but all incoherently, and without any sort of chain which could connect it in Lady Marston's mind with poor Thornhill's death, or with his title to the property in question. There was but one word which sharpened her curiosity: "The book, my lady: och! it was the book I've been draming on to tell you this many a day."

"Book, Donovan! What book do you mean? The wine and water quick, Mrs. Gray."

Here Mrs. Gray administered the draught.

"The pocket-book; we sent it by the mail: there it went safe, my lady, to the direction, Sir Frederick Marston. 'Tis the mail: I gave it myself. More by token, Misther Burke bid me be careful. He sent me away afterwards: but I knowed it all by the papers. The murder, and the search, and the book, an' all: but I was in foreign parts; and now I'm come back to die."

There was very little more to be got out of poor Donovan. He never rallied; and his father confessor never came again. He might have disapproved of a plurality of confessors in the village. Lady Marston took her way thoughtfully to the Abbey. She walked up the steps of the portico, turned round in the hall to the right, and entered a small room, where she hoped to have found Sir Frederick. She was not deficient in good sense, and had enough to know that she could not consult anybody better than her own husband. In the present case she was certainly right. I wish all my female friends would adopt

her views. If wrong, which might happen once in a hundred times, they could console themselves with having done the right thing, or with having no one to blame but themselves in having chosen a noodle instead of a man. Besides, obedience to delegated authority is the first of virtues. So the weaker vessel rang the bell.

"Is Sir Frederick in?"

"No, my lady; he is gone into the park with Mr. Thornhill."

"With Mr. Thornhill"—Lady Marston felt, without expressing, considerable surprise—"which Mr. Thornhill?"

"Mr. Charles." And whilst Lady Marston stood up at the window, and looked out meditating many things with herself, the servant left the room. Charlie was a valuable ally, if anything was required to be done: and his unexpected arrival was useful.

To persons of quick temperament nothing is so disagreeable as downright inactivity when burdened with business. It is all very well to

say that if Lady Marston could have sat still, she would have seen her husband and Charlie in the course of an hour. But she couldn't sit, so she sallied out to meet them, and—missed them.

At dinner they met. It was a comfortable meal in autumn; when one dines by daylight in the country, and finishes with a mysterious twilight. Candles were not brought in on this occasion. There was nobody else in the house; and the subject was discussed without the exhibition of painful feelings, which daylight or candlelight must have evoked.

"Yes, Emily, I recollect the book well enough: it was not a pocket-book, but your poor father's betting-book, Charlie;" here he turned to his guest: "he backed a horse of mine very heavily, called Benvenuto; and he must have won but for a robbery. A man called Kildonald——"

"Yes, I remember, Sir Frederick: it's long since I heard the story, but I have never forgotten it;" and Charlie clutched the stem of his claret

glass, and drained it. The bottle was with him, and he filled himself a bumper.

"And now what's to be done, Frederick? The poor fellow died this afternoon. You know the substance of our conversation. Can anything be made out of it to justify further steps?"

"Everything. We have Burke, Michael Donovan—you're sure of the name?—and the old clerk, if he's alive: I wish we had his name: and Cork must be the basis of our operations." Here Sir Frederick paused, helped himself, pushed the bottle to Charlie, and added, half-soliloquising, "Yes, we must try Ireland itself."

"I'll go at once," said Charlie, still attacking the '34.

"Take Diver, Charlie," said my lady.

"I don't like law, Lady Marston. I shall do better alone."

"I think not. Besides, what time have you?"

"A fortnight good, I can take."

"That's something; but you can't do without

what is called 'a legal adviser.' You'll get into some scrape, Charlie; and if you once alarm them, the opportunity will be lost."

"If you knew how I have it in my head. I've thought of it for years, and never forgotten a single thing you told me, when I first left old Gresham's."

"I believe it," said Sir Frederick.

"Then let me go. Poor Tom's abroad; and it wouldn't suit him."

"Then take Diver," again urged Lady Marston.

"If you wish it, I will."

And then Lady Marston rose from the table, and her husband opened the door with a grace and kindness that would have done credit to the first week of their honeymoon.

"How's the stud, Charlie?"

"Not large, but very good for Frankfort. I've a neat Arab, and a good English horse that I bought at Barton's sale when I was over here at the end of last season."

"No racing, I suppose, about Frankfort, or within reach of you?"

"Paris on one side, and not very far off Baden-Baden. They've taken to it very kindly. It's at present too much in the hands of English legs. But the young French world is so fond of it, they must succeed."

"It won't," said Sir Frederick.

"Why not?"

"Because, as soon as they take to betting, no horse will run on his merits: and then will follow handicaps, half-mile races, roping, welshing, and the whole train of evils to which we are accustomed. You know foxes are hunted and eels are skinned, but it doesn't follow that either is a pleasant amusement." Sir Frederick could just see to pour out one more glass of claret. "Shall we ring for candles?"

"No, thank you, I love this light."

"Or want of it?"

"Whichever you please. I can't talk by daylight."

"Is that a great deprivation, Charlie?"

"Sometimes. When I'm much interested, I'm generally able to say what I mean; but I often envy fellows who say it so much better."

"Ah! you're an admirer of eloquence. But all men are eloquent when they know their subject and feel it. That rascal Thoroughpin is the most eloquent man of my acquaintance. He never ceases talking when he wants me to buy; and persuades me against my sense, interests, and convictions. Gladstone himself never accomplished that."

"I've no self-confidence."

"Then don't go to Ireland without Diver. Have you finished?"

Lady Marston was pouring out tea at a small round table. The room was glowing with light: a sudden change. Charlie buried his long body in a fauteuil near Lady Marston, while Sir Frederick took up a pamphlet and prepared to read.

Lady Marston looked at Charlie, gave him his tea, and said, carelessly enough, "Have you seen

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or heard of the Dacres lately?" The question was simple, but Charlie felt like a ship on fire. Some men, poets probably, would have said that his colour came and went: the truthful historian is compelled to declare that it only came. There was no "go" about it at all. He got redder and redder as he answered truly—

"I came from there yesterday."

"How are they all? Alice looked ill through the season; and when she was at Thornhills she was exceedingly unwell."

"Thornhills is damp in the autumn, it's so surrounded by trees." By this time Charlie was getting a natural colour again: he ventured to look at his questioner.

"I'm glad they go to Thornhills. Since Tom has been on the Continent the place is lonely for my mother, and she seems to have taken to the girls." Charlie swallowed a little confusion in his tea, which being hot, made his eyes water.

"Where is your brother? Does he think of coming back?"

"He was at Naples last winter. Carlingford persuaded him to go there from Como. He'll not come back to live at Thornhills, I fear."

"I've no patience with Tom Thornhill," said Lady Marston, viciously biting a piece of thin crisp toast, which gave peculiar force to her verdict. "He might have been anything or have done anything: he has thrown away too many chances. As a country gentleman, six years ago, he was the man of his day. Why doesn't he get into Parliament?"

"He says politicians are so dishonest," said Charlie, shyly.

"What's that?" inquired Sir Frederick, looking up from his pamphlet.

"Oh! I beg your pardon; it's only Tom's idea of politics. Of course he knows nothing about it: but he says political integrity is 'all my eye.'"

"Well, perhaps he's not far wrong. Does he find men more scrupulous on the turf?"

"He says they're nearly as bad, but that he's

prepared for it there. Have you any horses, Sir Frederick?"

"None in training: I've given it up. I breed a little for amusement; but the turf is very different from what it was when your poor father and I went on it thirty years ago. Talking of the turf, what is become of Wilson Graves?"

"He went abroad after the match between my brother's horse and Robinson Browne's mare." Charlie said nothing more.

"I heard he lost a great deal of money: and something was said about his trying to get at the horse. Of course nobody believed that, men do tell such wonderful falsehoods."

"What's become of young Robinson Browne, Lady Marston? I've not seen him since the match."

"He's going to be married to Lady Susan Trumpington. He has been most liberal about the settlements, and the Trumpington property is unembarrassed once more."

"And Harlington?"

"Nobody knows anything about Harlington. He was exceedingly attentive to Alice Dacre; and, as he was certainly the best match of the season, everybody settled it to their own satisfaction. Your old aunt, Lady Casterton, was especially sharpsighted; but it all came to nothing; and he disappeared from the scene. Is there any truth in the report that your mother is to leave Thornhills? We have a place in this neighbourhood that would exactly suit her and Mary Stanhope."

"I think not. All sorts of stories were about, I've no doubt, when my brother went abroad; and it was really supposed to be in the market; but Tom won't have her disturbed, as long as she likes to live there: and it wouldn't be very easy to let it."

"Have you seen your mother yet, since you came from Frankfort?"

"Not yet," sheepishly.

"Nor your Aunt Casterton?"

"No one but you," flatteringly.

"And the Dacres. How goes on the banking?"

"Very flourishingly. I'm glad I took your advice. It's better than soldiering."

"Now take some more. Go and call on Roger Palmer, you owe him a visit; and your uncle Henry: you have no better friend in the world. And now, Fred, if you and Charlie want a cigar, you'd better have it; it's growing late. Good night."

In three days' time Charlie was steaming from Bristol to Cork, in company with Mr. Diver.

CHAPTER IV.

IRELAND.

"The thicket is beset, he cannot 'scape."—*Two Gentlemen of Verona.* Act v. Scene 3.

THE voyage to Cork is at no time a pleasant one; and when, after about six-and-thirty hours of intolerable pitching and tossing, Charlie received for reply to a natural demand as to their whereabouts, that "faix, his honour was *on the say*," he managed to climb out of his berth, and nearly wrung the neck of the cabin-boy. He was a shock-headed young ruffian, and so appreciative of a joke, that he had already been thrashed for this one no less than five-and-twenty times. He only escaped when the body was too sick to defend the mind. The getting up to do anything proved a great amendment, and finding, after a hurried toilette and as much

cold water as he could get hold of, that he was not more than two-thirds drunk and one asleep, Charlie scrambled upon deck in time to catch the first glimpse of Cove and the Black Rock. In a few hours more they were in Cork.

If this were about the beginning of the second volume of a fine old-fashioned half-bound marble-covered affair, instead of being, as it is, near the beginning of the end, I should delay my reader to carry him a tour through Ireland, or at least a certain portion of it. I recommend him, if he wishes to know anything about it without the trouble of going there, to apply to some of the numerous tourist volumes, headed Killarney, or Glengariff, or Bantry Bay, which about embraces the parts traversed by Mr. Diver and our friend. As regards the going there oneself, that's a matter of taste. I liked it: but then I'm fond of scenery, character, fighting, and general excitement. I don't dislike roughing it here and there. Can do without feather beds, carpets, a valet, or a fireplace; can

sleep with my window open or shut, broken or whole, with my door locked or unlocked; am a convenient height, say 5 ft. 10 in., so that I can wear anybody's clothes of reasonable size; and 11 st. 8 lb., so that I can ride anybody's horse of reasonable weight. I am equally handsome with or without a beard, having tried both; am lavish of money when I have it, and can make a shilling go as far as—twelvepence (and there's an enormous difference) when I'm hard up. I prefer truffles, and clear turtle, and cliquot sec, with every conceivable delicacy of the French cuisine; but I can live upon bread, beer, whisky, Swiss cheese, and Dorsetshire draught cider, which latter drink I take to be the nastiest thing in existence, and calculated only for the "*durissima ilia messorum*," which has nothing to do with the army: a mistake not altogether impossible to the unlearned.

If any man can do this, let him knapsack the Tyrol and Ireland; if not, let him stop at home. By the way, a great many persons like to travel

in order to say that they have been to Constantinople. A word of advice. "If that's your motive, say it, and don't go." Because, my dear friend, in your case, if ever a lie was worth the money, that's it: and with the assistance of Murray you may "forge all the endorsements, as well as the bill."

"Now, what's the first thing to be done, Mr. Diver?" said Charlie, as they sat over their breakfast on the following morning. They had seen, be it remarked, the Custom House, the County Prison, the Episcopal Palace, the Infirmaries, and the quays, and had already admired the female population of Cork, which disported itself on the day before on the Mardyke; so that the question had evident relation to business.

"I've a friend, or old acquaintance, once a lawyer, now a magistrate, who may assist us in this business."

Nicholas Corcoran lived in a handsome house near the centre of the modern town, south of the River Lee. He was the last of the pigtails, wore

black breeches, and well-blacked boots up to the knee; a square cut, straight-collared blue coat, with metal buttons; a very soft and voluminous white neckcloth, and a long striped waistcoat of buff colour. He was a shrewd, clever old man—handsome, delicate-looking in figure and feature, with sharp grey eyes and dark lashes and brows, which contrasted curiously with his white hair, which was thinly scattered on his brow, and grew more thickly and wavily on each side of his temples. He was a good judge of law and claret; and dispensed both with equal hospitality. His reception of Diver and Charlie was distinguished by great urbanity, and a determination that they should dine with him that day. In the mean time, what could he do for them?

"Did I know Burke?" said the old gentleman, after an explanation of their visit had been laid before him, as far as was needful. "Indeed I did: sorrow a gentleman in Cork that didn't know him, for he robbed us all. But he was the best sportsman and the greatest scoundrel I ever

saw; and they seldom go together. If he's not dead he's afther no good now."

"You've heard of an old clerk he had, who ——"

"What, Phelim O'Brian? he is in Cork still, and a greater scoundrel than the other. If there's any one can tell you anything about Burke, it's Phelim. He's been accused of forgery and every other crime in the world, short of murder, since his absence, and might have been guilty of both."

"And where shall we find him between this and six o'clock?"

"You must cross the bridge at the bottom of the next street to this, and that leads to the old town on the north side of the river. But stay, the streets are narrow and irregular; don't be afraid of dirt or misery, Mr. Thornhill, my servant shall put you in the way. "After many thanks, Thornhill and Diver withdrew.

Mrs. O'Brian, the mother of Phelim, received them. She was eighty-five years of age, and

looked a hundred. She was muttering a low chant over a small turf fire, on which was a kettle: she took but little notice of the strangers, and when asked for her son, pointed upwards — whether she meant in heaven, or only up-stairs, no one knew. The two men only guessed that it was not the former, so chose the latter alternative. They ascended, however, and there found Phelim and a long-coated terrier.

Below stairs, nothing could have been more wretchedly miserable than the whole appearance of things. It divulged the last stage of poverty previous to absolute starvation. Up-stairs, things were more cheerful. Phelim was a miserable-looking object himself—lean, lank, and dirty, and bearing a strong resemblance to his mamma; but he was surrounded by business, in the way of writing materials, chairs, a table, a bottle of whisky, though it was early in the day, and a pipe, which he laid aside on the entrance of the two.

"Maybe I'll be able to do something for you, gentlemen?"

"Nothing at present; much hereafter, if you can only inform us where Mr. Burke is to be found."

Phelim looked up with a scared look; and then, recovering himself, asked if it was "Mr. Burke of the Blackwater Villas, or of Tivoli, on the river, a little way out of town."

It was neither—and this led to an explanation of *the* Mr. Burke in question. And then he knew nothing. And no one knows the immovability of an Irishman's determined stupidity, till he has tried it. He almost forgot the name; nearly denied his own identity; and, when compelled to admit that he had been his clerk at the time of his quitting the country, pretended never to have heard of him, or from him, from that day to this.

"There's an estate called the Kildonald Estate. Who receives the rents?"

"That's Mr. Burke himself that receives

them." Here he looked uncomfortable; and a gradual tremor crept over Phelim O'Brian.

"But he's not been in England for years; and yet the rents go somewhere."

"Is it the rents? Sorrow any rents we get. It's the agent in London—he comes down twice a year."

"What's his name, Phelim? Come, don't be afraid. It will be a fine thing for you, when the business is righted. You'd like a little agency round here?" (May Mr. Diver be forgiven—Charlie allowed him to lie.)

"Indeed it would suit me, and the ould woman down stairs."

"It's possible, Phelim; but where's Burke?"

"How would I know? didn't he go to Australia, and then to America? leastways they say the New Yorkers was puzzled quite. I'd a thought he'd ha' met wi' his match there, anyhow."

"But where is he now?" said Charlie, putting in an obviously leading question.

"Honour bright, I don't know. I wish I did."

"What would you do?"

"By my soul, I'd make him curse the day ever he cheated Phelim O'Brian out of a year's wages."

"But you don't know where he is?"

"I don't, yer honour."

"Leave us together, and I'll see you at dinner," said the wily lawyer (aside). "Well, Thornhill (aloud), it's no use—he knows nothing, so we'll be off. Good morning, much obliged—" he got thus far, but no farther, for no sooner had Phelim O'Brian heard the name of Thornhill, than, rising suddenly from his chair, he repeated the name three or four times, and, resuming his seat, seemed with difficulty to restrain himself.

Charlie, who had sense enough to know that Diver was the proper person to hunt the fox, though he might ride to him, obeyed him implicitly; and, though he fully comprehended the

value of this exclamation, he turned round, and made his way down the ruined staircase without eliciting a remark from the old lady in the chimney-corner.

He was no sooner gone than Mr. Diver brought his artillery to bear: and the town was not long before it began to hang out signals of distress or capitulation. It was evident that Phelim O'Brian was to be bought. Burke had left him at his utmost need: and, in placing the Atlantic between himself and his country, never counted on his animosity.

Money and safety were the two grand things for which Phelim stipulated. The first was a certainty, the latter nearly so: for the best of all reasons, that he seemed to have known very little, and acted entirely under Burke's directions. Of the papers connected with the Kildonald property he knew nothing, excepting that they had been stolen from the office on the night of the robbery. There were others whom it was absolutely necessary to find before much

could be made out of the business. There were the two Donovans. One was dead, we know, the other was nobody knows where. He had had half-a-dozen aliases: he was Donovan, and Heenan, and Daly. To Mr. Diver these names conveyed nothing; but when Charlie heard them he pricked up his ears. There was one George, too, an illegitimate son of Kildonald's, as they said; he knew something about Burke, but he had never been heard of. One thing only came out after three days' examination, and an endless effort to make out something about Michael Donovan, quite unsuccessfully. Burke had deliberately forged the date and name to several deeds, drawn out by Phelim himself, after the death of old Mr. Kildonald, conveying to him certain interest in the estate for so many thousand pounds received on account, but which thousands had never been paid at all. To prove this it was necessary to secure Mr. Phelim, and Charlie very wisely left it to Mr. Diver to make use of his professional knowledge for the purpose.

When Charlie left Cork he had enjoyed some good dinners at Mr. Corcoran's table; he had seen something of the beauty and easiness of the Cork ladies; he had tested their inflammability to a certain extent, and found them as soft as gun-cotton, and equally combustible; but he had made no progress in the discovery of his father's murderers, and went back to England more determined than ever of purpose.

Of course he ran down to Thornhills. His mother was all affection, as usual; but while she talked to him, and of his prospects, it was evident that she was thinking of Tom. Mary Stanhope thought they had both been spoilt; and as to Tom's folly, it was perfectly inconceivable. She hoped Charlie was not making a fool of himself with those Dacre girls. They ought to marry rich men. Edith was flighty, and would make a capital wife for young Lord Buddicombe, who came out at an Exeter Hall meeting on the Young Women's Mental Discipline Association. He would have a home

specimen to practise on. Alice was as proud as Lucifer—though, poor dear thing, she certainly was very ill. When Charlie wanted to make a fool of himself, he'd better do so with a banker's or alderman's daughter. She didn't know what was come to the young people of late years. Charlie's own extravagance was quite sinful: he didn't play, but he spent it all on himself. And when he took leave, which he did in a couple of days, she gave him a cheque for a hundred pounds, "to buy a little present," from Aunt Mary. She had made it two hundred to Tom, as being the most in want and the least deserving of it.

He forgot neither his Uncle Henry nor Roger Palmer. The former he found, as usual, in Pall Mall, in the midst of business. Everything had a prosperous look about him but the man himself. He looked worn, prematurely aged, and overworked — a dull stone in a gorgeous setting. He was to Charlie the same as ever; touched lightly, but kindly, on Tom's extrava-

gance, and hoped Thornhills might be saved. He could not buy it, or he would. "If ever you have the chance, Charlie, don't throw it away."

Charlie walked off thoughtfully enough. If his uncle did not put it in his power, who would? By this time he had reached Roger Palmer's. The old man was delighted with everything his *protégé* had done. His services would be very valuable in another year or two at home.

The first person Charlie saw on his return to Frankfort was his own groom. He looked very steadily at the man, and then began to wonder at his own stupidity. If every one was as honest, what an admiring world this would be! He recognised him directly. This was the man who held his horse, who stole his dog, who sent him to Whitechapel, and who called on him at Armstrong's. And now he saw the difference. The one character was that of a cunning-looking, half-ferocious sort of person, with bullet

head, ragged whiskers, unkempt, unshorn, who looked lost without the attendance of Calcraft. The other was that of an active, cleanly, close-shaven, practical groom. Not the fine gentleman, who spent one half of the year at Melton and the other between Newmarket and London; but there was a something still in the man's eye that recalled his former characteristics at once.

"How are the horses, Donovan?" said his master.

The man jumped round as if he had been shot. All colour left his cheeks; and then, as suddenly recollecting himself, he said, "I ask yer pardon, sir; did ye spake?"

"I asked after the horses: that's all. Is the brown English horse all right?"

"Yes, sir, they're both right enough; and his feet's improving, anyhow. I kept his heels nice and open; and I wouldn't let 'em even cut away his frog. Baron Hartzstein's man wants the master to buy him."

"If he's big enough to carry me, I may as well keep him as sell him."

"He's the horse that can do it, yer honour: he's near thoroughbred, and has great hocks and a good back. He'd make a steeplechaser, if he knows how to lep."

"I'll ride him at half-past three;" saying which, Charlie turned from his stables, and made his way to Madame Meyerheim's. "I think we know where to put our hands upon Mr. Donovan when we want him." And Charlie entered the *porte cochère*, and rang the bell.

"What, Miss Donald, all alone? Well, I hope you are all as I left you. But you look unwell yourself," added he, after a pause, in which he stood looking at the pretty eyes of his compatriot.

"Miss Donald," said Bertha, "is very naughty, I'm sure."

"Why so, Bertha? what makes you think so?" said Charlie, encouragingly.

"Ah! I know, but I won't tell. I know she

is, because she's just like me." Bertha was a flat-faced, blue-eyed little girl, with flaxen hair.

"Not much, Bertha, I should think."

"Yes, but she is. She's always crying now; and I only cry when I'm naughty."

Charlie looked round, and Kathleen jumped up, and left the room.

"Well, Bertha, and what have you been doing since I went away? Who's been here to play with you?" And Charlie drew the child towards him.

"Oh! there's another gentleman been here instead of you; and he goes to the Thier Garten, and to Mainlust, and—and—but I don't like him so well as you, he talks such funny English." Little pitchers have good ears as well as long.

"Really, that's kind. And what's his name?"

"I don't know his name, but he came here with Comte Degenfeld."

Charlie changed the conversation, and after chatting with Madame Meyerheim, and hearing

that the officers were to give a grand ball at the Casino, he took his leave.

So his friend Hartzstein was not gambling at Homburg. There must be some attraction to keep him in Frankfort—perhaps his friendship for Degenfeld, or his pleasure in Herr Meyerheim's society, or—something else.

Charlie's Irish groom was not exactly what he seemed. His life had been a chequered one. He was well brought up, for a cotter's son. The priest and the squire had stood his friend when a boy, and had sent him to school. More than that, they saw that he learnt, and had half-a-crown in his pocket. But he took to evil courses: he took to poaching and horsebreaking instead of quilldriving in Burke's office, for which he was intended. Then he began to wander further afield. He became a vagabond frequenter of race-meetings, and Burke discarded him. Presently he returned, starving, begging; and want drives out honesty when it has a tendency to go of itself. Burke had something for him to do,

which he did, unscrupulously and effectively. And the two had a hold on one another; but the rich and respectable man's grip was the tighter. Poverty has a lying look when confronted with wealth. By-and-by he got honester, and tried to work, but it took him a great many years to do so. He was a tout, then a stable-boy, then he became a helper in some large stables, and when he got the chance he became a groom. He had not been so happy since he was a child in his father's house on the Kildonald estate; and the name of Thornhill had a mysterious charm for him. He had been of service to Charlie before this; and we love those we can serve. Aristotle gives a selfish reason for this in our own vanity—perhaps the true one.

A few days later, Charlie was smoking in the stable, a reprehensible but not unpleasant practice, when Daly said to him—

"Baron Hartzstein was looking at your English horse, yer honour: he wants to buy him."

"He may have him: I've seen one belonging

to a Hungarian gentleman." Charlie looked very indifferent.

"He goes well in harness: it's a grand horse he is in leather."

"It's just what he's fit for. If he wants any information, the baron can ride and drive him (I suppose he's quiet), and the price is eighty pounds."

"I'll be puzzled entirely, faix, with the pounds. It's about francs and florins he's always axing. Maybe I'll tell him too little."

"Then say two thousand francs: that's about the mark." The next day the horse was sold.

Charlie sat in a brown study one day, about three o'clock, smoking a German pipe. It was rarely that he indulged in that way; but his cigars were getting low, and he had no fancy for the produce of Bremen or Hamburg in lieu of the Havannah. So he took to a pipe. "Come in," said he; and there entered a not frequent visitor or two: Degenfeld, De Weiler, and Hartzstein.

"Herr Carl becomes quite the German," said Degenfeld.

"How's the pipe? Tastes he good?" said De Weiler.

"Middling, thank you, baron," replied Charlie. "There's a cigar for you. Hartzstein, those are some of Tom's: you'd better take one."

The two barons helped themselves, and the Comte followed their example. Charlie rang the bell. "Bring up a bottle of steinwein."

"Do you go to the ball given by the Grand Duke next week, Mr. Thornhill?" said De Weiler, who was not an old acquaintance, and consequently more formal than Hartzstein and Degenfeld. "I hear some of your countrymen are coming over from the spas."

"Yes; I have a carte, and intend going."

"And your pretty countrywoman?" said Degenfeld: "Hartzstein raves about her."

"I agree with him," said Charlie; "but she's not quite a countrywoman: she's Irish."

"Irish or English, will she be there?" said Hartzstein.

"I hardly think so. The Meyerheims are going, I presume; but——"

"I have carte blanche, and if Madame Meyerheim——"

"I should not like to propose it to Madame Meyerheim, myself," interposed Thornhill, "if I were the Grand Duke's most intimate friend; and I don't think the Baroness Hartzstein would feel complimented if she were placed in the same situation as Miss Donald."

Here the conversation dropped: and Charlie inquired what the Baron thought of his new purchase. He liked him much: the horse rode well, and was good in harness; a capital match to the one he had brought with him from England. Young Phelps, the *attaché* to the embassy, had offered Hartzstein a hundred for him.

Before the three gentlemen rose to go, Degenfeld drew nearer to Charlie. "Mr. Thornhill, I expect an Englishman to dine with me and our

friends here, next week, at the Hôtel de Russie, privately: will you join us?"

"Certainly, with pleasure."

"What day will suit you? We can make it any day."

"Say Wednesday, then. Adieu, adieu!" They all shook hands, and parted. Two of their sabres clanked down stairs, and they sallied into the Zeil. Charlie finished his pipe, and went to the bank.

"Confound that fellow Hartzstein's impudence," thought he: "these Germans are the most impertinent fellows alive. When an Englishman means wrong, or does wrong, he is seldom proud of it. But these fellows are as fond of their vices as a North American Indian of his scalps. Poor girl! I wonder what old Donald and his wife are like. Upon my soul, she stands in a very awkward position. Meyerheim's as good as gold; so is his wife. But they know no more of fellows like Hartzstein than I do of astronomy. It certainly is no business of

mine. I wonder whether Degenfeld knows anything about it. What's every man's business is nobody's business. It's every man's business to protect a poor girl from an unprincipled blackguard like Hartzstein. If she wasn't so good-looking I'd do something towards stopping it myself: but there isn't a soul here or in England that wouldn't say I was in love with the girl myself." Such were Charlie's meditations as he sat on a three-legged stool, staring at vacancy: and no man can deny that, though slow and old-fashioned in his notions, they were tolerably just —for the Dunce of the Family.

The day before the intended dinner at Degenfeld's Charlie sat at his desk in an inner room of the bank. He had had letters from England, detailing the course of events in Ireland. Diver was in full cry, and hoped not only to secure the testimony of Donovan, but the person of Burke himself. The latter was living under his own name not twelve months ago, as the rents had been received from the Kildonald estate, and

receipts signed by his agent in his name. That gentleman had not yet appeared: doubtless he would be found within a month of the next rent-day. Burke had been traced to America; and there, finding the aborigines as barbarous and the settlers as unprincipled as himself, he had disappeared. Charlie was requested to be as quiet as possible, and to awake no suspicion of the intended investigation.

The letters from Lady Marston, and one from Mr. Dacre, who occasionally wrote to him, were full of English gossip or family news. Tom's affairs were better than had been expected. His mother and Mary Stanhope were at Thornhills for the winter. Lord Audley had proposed and been rejected by Alice Dacre, and Robinson Browne was going to be married to Lady Susan Trumpington: lots of blood for the money, as the Piccadilly Phenomenon might observe. Both letters spoke of the rapidly failing health of Henry Thornhill, who was gone into the country for change of air; and Mr. Dacre seemed to

think that he might pass the next winter in the south of Italy—he did not say for what reason.

"A letter by private hand for Mr. Thornhill," said one of the clerks, opening the door of Charlie's room. He placed it on the table. The edging was black as well as the seal, and the handwriting was unknown to him. It had a lawyer-like appearance. Charlie was but mortal himself, so he turned it and twisted it, and looked at the crest, and made a dozen conjectures. He never guessed right; and, with some fear of undefined calamity, he broke open the letter. When opened he did not look at it for a minute or more; and when he did, the truth was told in a most unceremonious fashion. His uncle had died without a warning and without a struggle. Henry Thornhill was no more. Enclosed was a letter, the last that had been written by the deceased, addressed to Charlie, and to be forwarded to him as soon as circumstances permitted. As its contents concern no one more than the reci-

pient, and may well remain undisclosed until the requirements of the story bring them to light, I shall try the reader's patience, if he feel any curiosity to know them.

CHAPTER V.

INTENTIONS.

Of course in London the death of a man like Henry Thornhill created a sensation; but it was quite as much to know what he had left behind him, as anything else, which made him the subject of conversation at the West End Clubs. He was regretted by the men of his own time, for he had a happy knack of securing the friends he had made. Some few women, with whom he was on more than usually intimate terms, were his sincerest mourners: as a rule, he was unpopular with them. Lady Marston especially mourned for a right hand: he was the only man, besides her husband, whose opinion she particularly cared to have when the case involved a delicacy. Mrs. Thornhill liked her husband's brother, but she never had appreciated him: he

was not demonstrative. Mary Stanhope understood him better. The fact is, he was a very clever man, a very honest man, and a cynic. Familiarity with his brother's family was not to be looked for; and he may therefore be excused for seeing none of the virtues of Tom Thornhill. Charlie was his favourite: he said so, and took every opportunity of showing his preference; and in the world's eye Charlie was heir to his thousands.

Charlie meantime had leisure to digest the last words of Uncle Henry. "He was a good fellow," said Charlie to himself; "and though it's not so pleasant as it might have been, I'm sorry for him. I hadn't a better friend in the world, I believe, excepting my mother, and Lady Marston, and Mary Stanhope, and——. Well! there are lots of 'em when you begin to add them up. Why in the world did he make Roger Palmer one of his executors? and why must I talk matters over with him? The two men are so different. I should like to know what there is in that other

letter which I am not to know at present. Here, Daly, take this note to Comte Degenfeld's: there's no answer."

The young Englishman expected to dinner was Teddy Dacre, so that they had a narrow escape of meeting; and Dacre did not know that Charlie was in Frankfort. Dacre was on his way to England, having leave from the embassy at Berne.

That's a very pleasant life, that attachéship. When I see the gallant young fellows at high jinks with Mademoiselle Crinoline of the Variétés, or the lovely Adèle of the Palais Royal, disporting themselves at the bal masqué, or at some continental Cremorne, shying champagne corks across half a dozen little tables to the charming Iphigénie and her dear Duc, who are fighting aloud over the leg of a pullet, and shocking the respectable company between them, then I see the advantages of our diplomatic system, and admire the pertinacious determination of our rising Talleyrands to acquire a correct accent.

Teddy Dacre had done all this, and was now acting the sterling character of the virtuous young English gentleman to the edification of his co-attachés and the distinguished circle of which an attaché is always a segment. He was very fond of Charlie, and Charlie of him; and I think, had they met, Charlie might have employed his diplomatic talents on a special mission of some importance.

"What the deuce has become of Henry Thornhill's money?" said Sir Herbert Cardstone to his friend De Beauvoir, as they walked steadily over a turnip-field on the estate of the former.

"Aw — aw — speculated — speculated. Lost every shilling. Mysterious case altogether. Very sudden: only ill two hours." (He had been ill of bronchitis one fortnight, and eventually died of inflammation of the trachea.) "—— hard on Charlie Thornhill, I call it."

"Why so? That brown dog of yours is drawing."

These were old-fashioned, middle-aged sportsmen, and used dogs.

"Confound the dog: how wild the birds are. What right has a fellow to die in that way, and leave nothing, when the only reason one could have an uncle a banker is to inherit his money? A banker without money is a —— anomaly. There goes another brace."

"Have you ever seen a regular driving day? said Sir Herbert.

"Lots of 'em. Day at Bedfont. Gad! I believe you. My old governor was a member of the club." Here it occurred to De Beauvoir that he had changed foxes—at least he and Sir Herbert were not on the same, so he pulled up.

"I mean driving partridges: we do it down here sometimes late in the season, without dogs," explained Sir Herbert Cardstone.

"Oh! partridges? To be sure. By Jove! we had a grand day last year at Thornhills. Tom Thornhill was there, and the Dacres, and

old Dorrington, and Corry, and one or two men. We walked in a line over all the turnips in the two parishes, with six or seven beaters between each of us. Capital fun it is, too. Only Tom walks such a pace and shoots so quickly that no one has a chance with him."

"Who has Thornhills now? Tom's away," said the baronet.

"Mrs. Thornhill and Miss Stanhope are living there. Tom talks of coming home for the shooting in December; and Charlie, I fancy, will be over again—unless this death of his uncle makes some change in his plans."

"I should like to have Thornhills better than any place I know," said Sir Herbert Cardstone. (That's the second time he would have said it in this book, but we stopped him before.) "But what difference should his uncle's will make to Charlie's prospects, except the loss of the money?"

"Charlie," said De Beauvoir, who was not a bad fellow, but a club gossip, "was supposed to

be engaged to Edith Dacre, and the prospects were brightened, but dimly, by his expectations from his uncle. The light was very small, you know, but it was bright enough to keep up—what you may call it—hope, as the poets say, and now Charlie's rushlight is out altogether. I don't think the old lady will stand even Charlie without something more than a bank salary, which is all he has at present."

"Why, De Beauvoir, they used to talk about you for one of those girls."

"The world's given to lying, Cardstone; and you're quite old enough to know it. You've been married a hundred times, only you didn't hear it: that's all. I quite think a man might do worse, and not burn his fingers much. They're both charming girls."

"Why doesn't Thornhill marry? There must be lots of girls with a few thousands that would jump at him," said Cardstone.

"Thornhill is very young, but is almost fit for nothing but a race-course or a card-table.

The worst part of it is, that he's hardly bad enough for the former, and too good for the latter. If he'd been anything but a gentleman, Gad! what a fellow he'd have been! But I should like to know where the girls with the few thousands are: one of them might do for me."

Just then Nell pointed, and was backed by the brown dog, and the two forgot the very existence of the Thornhills and the Dacres, and concentrated their energies upon what proved to be —a false point. But the reader knows how the world was informed upon the point in question.

About the same time two scenes were enacting in Germany with which our hero was directly or indirectly concerned, as will appear hereafter. On a dark warm night in autumn, or now just verging towards winter, three men stood in a small, well-furnished room with folding-doors. There was in the room a round table, on which were two packs of cards, scattered about, and a dice-box and backgammon-board. On the small

table on one side of the room was a tray with some half-emptied glasses and two empty bottles, one of champagne, the other of a labelled Rhein wine, and a stone bottle of Seltzer water. All three men were smoking cigars. One was a tall dark-haired and dark-eyed man, very pale, with very handsome features, but a close, cruelly-compressed mouth: he was playing with a pair of dice, which he held in his hand, and rolled over and over on the table.

"One more main, Burke," said he, turning a cigar in his mouth.

"No, no, Morris; be easy. The baron will give you your revenge another time. Have another glass of champagne, and let's turn in: his lordship's 'most at his hotel by this time." The other two were Burke and the Baron Hartzstein. Morris rose steadily enough, drained a tumbler of wine and Seltzer water, and wishing them, "Good-night," took his leave.

"Who's that man, Mr. Burke?" said the baron, as he closed the door.

"A very successful gambler, Baron Hartzstein."

"He lost heavily to-night, surely. He owes you money."

"He can afford to pay it. What luck Lord Carlingford had, to be sure!"

I am glad of the opportunity of saying that Burke's scheme on that profligate young man had utterly failed. He lost much money in England on the turf, but here he seemed always to win. He drank like a fish, ate a most excellent dinner, and ended invariably by carrying off all the ready money at the table, with some valueless I O U's into the bargain. I hope he hadn't sold himself, &c., &c. He was certainly economising in his way.

After some preliminary conversation, in which language asserted its right to conceal meaning, Hartzstein seemed suddenly to grow tired of beating about the bush.

"You say you know the father and mother; and can assist me?"

"I can and will," said Burke, with a fierce vehemence. "And now I'll tell ye why,— Because I hate him, and all connected with him. You say you are prepared to go any lengths to attain your object. There is no risk; no danger, set about properly; but there must be money; and I——"

"Anything you want."

"Your carriage and horses: hired horses create suspicion, or direct it."

"Everything is at your service. Take my servants; and when you have arranged your plan, let me know, and we'll fix the day. The girl is well enough disposed for the journey, could I but once get her away from other influences. Do I make myself understood?" The baron spoke in German, which Burke, with the natural facility of an Irishman, had easily mastered during his residence abroad.

"Perfectly. And my services, baron?"

"Cannot be esteemed too highly." The baron took his leave, and strolled slowly down the hill,

ten minutes' walk to the middle of the Spa. His mind dwelt, not ill-temperedly, but with a curious vanity, upon one topic. "Charlie Thornhill, now we shall see what will become of your English woman."

As Burke shut the door of "The Mount," and prepared to lie down in the inner chamber, he thought with malicious cruelty on one topic for some time. "Now, Arthur Kildonald, we shall see how you like the tricks of *legerdemain*, in which you have taken no part."

One morning Charlie Thornhill took his hat and strolled leisurely along the Zeil. Turning up three or four steps on the left, he found himself in a flagged passage, with a small window barred with brass wire and closed: below it was a small door. "Hier darf man nicht rauchen!" So Thornhill threw away his cigar, and knocked at the little door.

A gruff, broad German face, with stiff blue frock-coat, and a strip of yellow braid on each

shoulder, presented——no, not himself, but his moustaches at the porte.

"Can I see the Chief of the Police?"

"If Monsieur will take the first door on the right, and ring." So Charlie took the first door on the right, and rang.

He was admitted into a large room, the chief furniture of which was a few chairs, a round table, a side table covered with papers, a stove, a bird-cage, and plenty of sand. The walls were covered with *affiches* in various languages, otherwise they were quite white. I never saw a place with so little disguise. It looked like a downward step to be in there at all; and when between a couple of gensd'armes it was as near a relation to solitary confinement as can well be conceived. To be petting a kitten in such a place, and smoking a pipe, seemed the grossest violation of the rules of social propriety. Yet when Charlie answered to the summons, "Hierein!" such was the employment of the man that received him. Over what would have

been the fireplace in England were some strong fetters.

"I believe I address the Chief of the Police?"

"Is there anything we can do for you?" He neither answered the question nor deserted his cat, but he rose politely, and offered his visitor a chair.

"I have a servant." Here the chief laid down his pipe.

"The name and address of Monsieur?" said the man, politely. He was tall, florid, stout; with straight, hard features, but good-looking.

"Thornhill, of Meyerheim's house; and Numero 361, Zeil."

"Good; we know all about Monsieur."

Some men might have been flattered, Charlie was not.

"Circumstances render it desirable that a close watch should be kept on my servant."

"His name and country?"

"Daly, I am told; Ireland."

"Monsieur is cautious. Has he been guilty of anything whilst with Mr. Thornhill?"

"Nothing whatever; and is an excellent servant. Still there are reasons."

"We understand, Monsieur," said the Chief of the Police. "He will not escape. You are sure his name is Daly, and his country Ireland?"

"Of the first, no; of the second, decidedly—yes."

The chief then took up from the table a paper, letting fall gently his cat upon the ground, stroking her at the same time, and calling her poor little pussy, as though loth to part with her. He read aloud: "'Five feet eight; flat face, very slightly marked with small-pox; whiskers lately shaven; strongly built, but not large; consigned as groom to Mr. Thornhill; character, good; antecedents, suspicious; answers to the name of Daly—supposed to be fictitious.' 'There, sir, is that the

man?" said the chief, looking up from his papers. "Not much chance of escape, there, I think. 'He has a scar on one thumb, and has lost his two eye-teeth and one molar; age, about forty.' 'I fancy that's your man, sir. He's one of the best servants in the town. 'Strict surveillance,' I have added to his name. Will that suffice?"

"Amply. I wish you good morning, Herr Diebnehmer, and am much obliged by your kindness."

And Charlie heard him say, as he turned to go out, "Poor little pussy, come den, come. Biedermann, has that fellow had his breakfast yet in cell 36?"

"No, sir."

"Then stop it. He wants a change of diet, or we shall have him kicking. I'll manage the municipality. Another flogging will do him no harm."

"And this is your kitten-fancier," thought Charlie; "and the canary bird. I wonder Herr

Diebnehmer is not suffocated by the mask he wears."

There was a neat-looking horse in Frankfort, with a bad character, which, I am obliged to confess, he deserved. At least, so said half the *manège* riders in the city, and all the horse-breakers and regimental riding-masters, most of whom he had managed to place on their backs, either in the barrack school or at exercise. He was a pretty, well-bred Hungarian horse, not very deficient in power, and of most undeniable pluck. He was not vicious, but playful; and it seemed only a question of how long you could hope to sit on his back. If he got tired before you, you had mastered him for the day; if not, you would have to return home with or without him, as the case might be. It is but right to say that, having succeeded many times in his efforts, he had become emboldened; and this made the mastery of him difficult of attainment. It is not surprising that he was to be sold cheap; the more so, as the young Baron von

Sturmfels had been deliberately kicked off twice at the head of his company. This was not to be borne; for if the Fraulein von Berlichingen once saw so melancholy a debasement of her soul's idol, the chances are she would have turned to worship her second deity, the Count von Rükenbachen, and placed him upon the pedestal now occupied by his rival, Von Sturmfels. This horse Charlie Thornhill set his heart upon; and he was not many hours in Charlie's hands before he was ambling about in the streets of Frankfort, with apparently as much good-humour as if he had never had his own way at all. It was a fine sight to the lovers of good horsemanship to see the two pacing gently along the Zeil, the young Englishman sitting closely down in his saddle without effort, and giving a sufficiency of liberty to his head to enable him to play with his bit, and turn from side to side, instead of that alternate urging and curbing which had made him the plunging, Astley-like performer that he had been.

Some little time after he had reclaimed this beast, he had given Hartzstein a mount upon him. Owing, probably, to the fact of his change of masters, he took to his old tricks. The baron resorted to his old form, spurs, and the curb, and though by no means deficient in pluck or experience, he was pitched off in the kennel, exactly opposite Herr Meyerheim's, and in a state of insensibility, was taken in there. In one week, with the exception of his collar-bone, he was again well; but whether it was that a degree of sympathy was excited for him which did not exist before, or the natural goodness of a woman's disposition, which disposes her to love everything which she can protect, it is certain that Hartzstein made much progress in the heart of Kathleen. That she was flattered by his attentions it is but natural to suppose; and day by day, as he prolonged his stay on some frivolous pretext, she became more in love. As to Hartzstein himself, his passion gained strength hourly; and he vowed to him-

self the possession of a girl whom he could not regard as fitted for the wife of a Viennese noble, even in his own unpretending position. His conversation with Burke we have seen. The reader can easily guess to whom their villanous designs referred.

To say that the death of Henry Thornhill affected Charlie very seriously would not be true. With the contents of his letter, and his solicitor's explanations, he was satisfied, but he failed to understand entirely his uncle's position. He had been his favourite nephew, he knew, but he had not been intimate with him, nor had his house ever afforded him a home. Under these circumstances he got over the loss pretty quickly, but was obliged, on the day of Comte Degenfeld's dinner, to absent himself altogether. We shall see to what important results it led. There was no other absentee, and Teddy Dacre found himself side by side with the count, and on the other side the Barons Hartzstein and de Weiler, in a private room of the Hotel de Russie.

CHAPTER VI.

FRUSTRATED.

A NICE little dinner is a charming invention of the enemy of mankind to dispel serious thought, and to deaden apprehension. A large heavy turban-and-feather business is quite another matter. One goes through that as a solemn duty, and expects to be rewarded for self-denial. About such a thing as that there should be nothing light but the pastry, and everything dry as the champagne. Eighteen people, not one of whom has been asked to the table without a motive.

"You must have Lord Alfred, dear, on Tuesday week."

"Why so, love? He is terribly stupid, and as deaf as a post."

"Because he owns three parishes in the

southern division; and if your brother is to be returned again, you mustn't forget him."

"And what am I to do about Sir Henry? There's no room for him."

"Gad! you must put on another leaf, and ask old Mrs. Perrywinkle to meet him. They're old friends; and his covers will be shot the beginning of next month, and it won't do for him to forget us."

"Do you care about my asking Adelaide instead of Mrs. Perrywinkle?"

"Oh! I can't stand Adelaide Tempest: by Jove, she's worse than old Lord Alfred: she talks as much, and, what's worse, you can hear every word she says."

"Well, then, all I've to say, dear, is this: you won't get your gardener's son into the Omnilogical School at Dunderhead, for Adelaide can do just as she pleases there." Then ensues, not a quarrel, but a matrimonial difference of opinion, in which both fight, and give way, and Adelaide and Mrs. Perrywinkle are both asked, and the

dinner becomes more oppressively stupid than ever.

If, on the other hand, the people are charming, and the dinner large, and good, it is quite impossible to enjoy either the one or the other. Depend upon it, that whilst the palate discriminates between the material delicacies of the cuisine, neither the tongue nor the ear is capable of uttering or imbibing the refinements of a truly enlightened wit. In a moderate degree the one promotes the other. A nice little dinner is perfectly compatible with the appreciation of refreshing converse. Attic salt is a wonderful appetizer in such a case. A pleasurable sensation is produced peculiarly congenial to *spirituelle* conversation. There being no great physical strain, a little mental tension is permissible; but when both influences are at work together, it reminds us of the tides. The sun and the moon, operating on opposite sides of our planet, produce nearly an equilibrium, or an accidental difference; whilst the efforts of the two combined produce an

effect which is always in excess of the *juste milieu*.

I therefore like a little dinner. It is but fair, however, to admit that ideas of a little dinner differ as much as anything in this world can differ. One man means an atrociously bad beef-steak, and a still worse pudding; another, half a dozen badly-cooked dishes, including cold, thick soup, soft fish, and a dingy table-cloth; a third delights to satisfy the cravings of his friends with a roast fowl and a boiled leg of mutton, what he calls a nice head of "sallery," and a glass of newly-concocted port. A sucking-pig, a green goose, and a Welsh sheep are all excuses, at one time or another, for a little dinner. Without myself presuming to dictate, of one thing you may be certain — that, in my view of the case, no gentleman marrying upon three hundred a year can venture upon giving little dinners.

But these little dinners are a national facility. They require a minute attention to detail, which

Englishmen expend on what they call higher objects, as if any object could be higher than one's daily bread; as if one's digestion did not depend on one's dinner, one's temper on one's digestion, and one's aspirations in this world on one's temper. As a nation we are not, therefore, a good light-dinner-giving people. The heavy and pompous we do to a turn: it is characteristic of our maritime, political, and commercial greatness. Commend me rather to the French. They study a dinner, and they give you such an one as shall help, rather than retard, the graces of conversation. The Germans are utterly out of court. Their vegetable diet, green pickles, stewed pears, roast veal and prunes are calculated to improve the conjectural readings of Sophocles, or to quarrel over disputed passages of the Annals of Tacitus, but they are not meant to promote wit in themselves, or a healthy appreciation of it in others. As a dinner, therefore, with the whole power of the cuisine of the Hôtel de Russie, Charlie Thornhill lost nothing by his absence

from the table of the Lieutenant Comte von Degenfeld.

"Have you seen Dornhill's new horse, de Weiler?" asked their host, producing some cigars, and tendering them to his guests.

"Not yet; but he is said to be dangerous. Is he the horse that hurt you, Hartzstein?" said de Weiler. Hartzstein blushed as he acknowledged the mischance. De Weiler was not remarkable for tact.

"He is a dangerous horse," said Hartzstein, "or rather was when I rode him; but he is become quiet with Charles Thornhill."

"Thornhill? Charlie Thornhill?" repeated Dacre. "Ah! I remember now. Charlie is in Frankfort. I quite forgot. He is banking here. I've been away from England, and not heard directly from him lately. Is he here now?"

"Certainly," said Hartzstein. "I saw him yesterday. He was to have dined here to-day with Degenfeld. By the way, I spent a few days

at your father's, Mr. Dacre, with his brother Tom, the last time I was in England."

"So I heard," said Dacre. "They say Tom Thornhill is nearly done. He's a fine fellow; but I know Charlie best. He saved my life at school, and my sister's the season before last, out hunting."

"I have been told so; but I never heard the particulars."

Teddy related them, and concluded by saying, "Talking of his riding, you never saw such a place as he jumped at the corner of our cover. However, he was always considered one of the best men in the midland counties. What's the horse he has now?"

"Oh! an incorrigible brute, an entire Hungarian, who has half killed half the men in the regiment. But Thornhill has quieted him. He came back to Frankfort, and bought him on purpose to practise some trick he learnt of your American Rarey. What did you think of him, Dacre?" said Hartzstein.

"I liked him very much. He's a very clever fellow with horses."

"Said to be rather a charlatan, wasn't he?" inquired Degenfeld.

"You know," added de Weiler, "that something like his method has been practised here, and in almost all cavalry schools, for years past."

"The same *method*," replied Dacre, who was unwittingly led into the defence, "but not the same principle."

"I don't understand the distinction exactly," said one of the three.

"Let me endeavour to explain, then. It was customary, occasionally, to put horses down in our own country, but no reason was given for doing so, nor was it supposed to be part of an organised system. Rarey's is. That's a very fine glass of hock that M. Sarg has given us."

"Yes," said Degenfeld: "the house is famous for it. And what is the principle involved in Rarey's practice?"

"Complete subjugation without active violence, succeeded by kindness."

"Is the horse capable of comprehending that? Women are not: they don't forget the process of subjugation," said Hartzstein.

"You speak as if you had had considerable practice, Hartzstein: however, horses are naturally good, entirely good: women, like ourselves, have a leaven of malice and wickedness, and don't always forget the struggle, whatever may be the result. Beware of a first quarrel!"

"But the horse fights, like the woman," said the baron.

"Yes; but from fear, not from vice. A young horse is mischievous from ignorance; but whatever vices he has have been contracted from bad management. I think Rarey's system would answer with children, though they seldom feel confidence where there has been much or continued strictness."

"And was Rarey usually successful?" asked Degenfeld.

"Invariably," said Teddy Dacre, "and with very bad horses."

"They became restive again, though," said Hartzstein, "when the restraint was removed: woman all over!"

"Now and then. And remember that in those cases the habits of vice were confirmed; and he had no fair chance of frequent repetition. The management of women is like the bitting, rather, of horses. Every horse can be ridden if you get the right tackle on him, and woman only wants the right man for her lord and master."

"I wonder whether your friend Thornhill is as clever with the one as the other," said Hartzstein.

"I should think he gives himself very little concern about the latter; but he's just the sort of person to obtain a very strong influence. He has all the qualities women most admire, and the strongest will I ever knew."

"And what are they?" inquired de Weiler.

"Great firmness, manliness, self-respect, and

chivalrous notions of their rights, with an utter absence of any vanity. He has a heart and arm of iron, with a silken hand."

"He's keeping them in practice with a very pretty Irish woman at present," said de Weiler. "I saw them together yesterday with Meyerheim's children."

"Who is she?" said Dacre, to whom Frankfort scandal was new.

"She is the governess at the house of his chief, with whom he formerly lived. She is said to be a woman of family, whose parents are needy, and who have left England from necessity." Degenfeld repeated only what he had heard, which was not far from the truth for a report.

"Then she is safe from Charlie Thornhill, I lay my life," said Dacre.

"Why so?" asked Hartzstein, abruptly.

"Because he's a gentleman," rejoined Teddy, who had very pretty notions on the subject for an attaché, and whose theory was excellent, what-

ever might have been his practice. He's more likely to protect her than to take advantage of a very helpless situation."

"You seem to have studied his character," said Hartzstein, rather insolently.

"I have," replied Dacre, not noticing the tone of the speaker; "and he is one of my most intimate friends. I know no one whom I should less desire for an enemy."

"Why so, again?" demanded Hartzstein.

"Because, though slow to move, he is perseverance itself; and though not a man of quick apprehension, he is singularly tenacious of an idea when once it has taken root. What is the name of the lady?"

"I forget," said Degenfeld. "Hartzstein can tell you: he's rather *épris* himself."

"She calls herself Kathleen Donald," said Hartzstein, thus appealed to. "The report goes that her father left England for some betting transactions years ago; and that that is not his true name. The Meyerheims know nothing of

him, but they describe the girl's mother as a lady. Of one thing you may be quite certain, that Thornhill is paying her very marked attention; and from your account we must accredit him with the very best intentions. Now, Degenfeld, you'll excuse me, but I'm going to dress for the ball."

The little dinner was finished with a cup of coffee and a cigar, and the guests separated, each on his own business or pleasure, as the case might be.

Hartzstein went to the ball, as did Degenfeld and de Weiler. The scene was gay and glittering as foreign ball-rooms are wont to be; and the supper a miserable failure to English notions. There was a general lack of beauty; but such as the free city and its neighbourhood afforded was there. The Meyerheims were there. Hartzstein paid his sweetest compliments to the banker's wife; but he saw no Kathleen Donald, as indeed he presumed would be the case, and Charlie Thornhill had not arrived. "But Englishmen

are always late," said he to himself, "or what can have become of him?"

We will not stay to analyse the sincerity of the smiles, or the truthfulness of some hearts there that beat beneath white satin and diamonds. A ball-room is a well-gilt mausoleum, and for every one heart made happy, there may be more than one made sorrowful. However, youth spreads its feathers to the golden sunshine, and they soon right themselves again, glittering not the less brightly that they have been watered by the tears of disappointment. Like plants, the judicious admixture of water and sunshine has strengthened them to put forth their flowers, and they grow the stronger and more enduring blossoms for an early check. Sometimes it comes off less happily. Either the check is too violent, or the remedy is not at hand: then the plant dies. But it is only one here and there, and the place is soon covered by a ranker grower, and no one misses the rarest flower of them all.

About the time that Degenfeld and his friends sat down to dinner, Charlie Thornhill had ordered his horses. They were short of work, and he desired his servant Daly to ride the Arab, he himself mounting the vicious Hungarian. They rode slowly out of the town, and being indifferent as to the route, he turned towards the left bank of the Lahn, on the road to Wetzlar. Charlie was not given to blue devils, but he had some reflections just now not the most cheerful in the world. The mystery connected with his uncle's will, and his ignorance of his affairs, affected him more than he chose to acknowledge. Brought up with the expectation of benefiting by his uncle's death, whenever it might happen, to a very considerable extent this utter frustration of his hopes made him seriously consider his position. It was not for himself alone. He had been accustomed for the last few months to think of his future prospects in connection with Edith Dacre. His sense of honesty did not permit him to indulge the same

happy reveries now, and he was only wondering what ought to be his course of action with regard to her and her family. That dinner of Degenfeld's was unlucky: had he only seen Edward Dacre, it might have been easily settled. But Thornhill, if he liked talking on such a subject little, liked writing less; and that, added to his natural shyness, made him trust to accident for a proper explanation of the affair. Of Edith herself he had no misgivings; but whether she ought to be asked to share the moderate income of the foreign correspondent of Messrs. Chalkestone and Co. was another affair.

I am reluctantly obliged to admit that as Charlie rode along he took no notice of the magnificent view which broke upon him to the west. The sun was sinking; and there stretched the chain of hills called the Berg Strasse, with Mayence in the middle distance, and the beautiful slopes of Wiesbaden. Magnificent prospect! and redolent of German chivalry and Ritterthum. If the view had been

ten times as beautiful, Charlie would have disregarded it. Unfortunately, he cared nothing whatever about scenery; and had the reminiscences of chivalry been ten times as apparent, he would have regarded them, as far as his limited knowledge went, as intolerable humbug, or practical robbery. He was himself eminently chivalrous, if honesty and the defence of the wronged formed a material part of the creed; but of the poetry of romance he had nothing, and cared less; and as, for every woman that these knightly spirits relieved, he firmly believed they carried off two to their own strongholds, he may be excused for his dubious admiration of the Middle Ages.

The time of year, as I have already implied, if not said, was middle autumn. A beautiful day was about to be succeeded by heavy banks of clouds in the south-west, which came up, louring, with the wind. The sun was darkened, and the moon, which was near its full, was hiding her light. In the distance lightning

began to play, and gradually the landscape had a turbid look, inky, streaked with sullen red. Charles Thornhill's horse had been a little troublesome, but he had sobered down again; as he heard the distant rumbling of the thunder, he began again to fidget and lash his sides with the quantity of tail that English taste had left him. By-the-way, the spoliation thickened his quarters, and gave him a home look, which, independently of taste, was valuable to Charlie. He was some distance from Frankfort when the storm began: somewhere in a region unknown to English travellers of these railway days, but hallowed by the "Sorrows of Werter." Charlie knew nothing of that. It was not in his way; and, I confess, is dry enough to stagger a better man.

"Daly, do you know of a public anywhere before we get back to Wetzlar?" It is an ominous name, but as the place really exists, I am exonerated of the pun. Daly rode up alongside of his master.

"Sorrow a public I know along here, sir. We passed one half an hour ago, coming out of the town, on the right-hand side; but it looked like a poor place, yer honour." And Daly saluted his master respectfully.

"Poor or rich, it's better than nothing; and I rather think we shall upset Kosciusko's temper if we get into the storm." Just then came a terrific clap of thunder, which certainly irritated the horse, whilst the lightning which preceded it made him start as if he were shot. Mr. Rarey's system had not yet taken into its consideration a thunderstorm. Charlie played with Kosciusko's mouth, and after some handling, induced him to settle. They then proceeded at a good trot, the Arab cantering after them towards the roadside public-house, the lightning and thunder continuing to roar behind them, and the rain evidently coming up in gusts from behind.

After ten minutes' sharp riding, and just as the floods descended, they pulled up at the little

roadside inn on the route to Wetlzar. It was a mysterious-looking place: not the resort of good company, however numerically strong. The windows were broken in places, the porte-cochère was old and worn. The front of the house was guiltless of paint; and not a soul seemed to be stirring. On their arrival Charlie jumped from his horse, and threw the reins to Daly, at the same time calling loudly for "the house." A fine big, good-humoured-looking fellow came to the door, pipe in hand, clothed in a blouse, and with a species of foraging-cap on his head. He wore a light moustache, and a pointed beard, uncommon in those parts: he had an indifferent air; but the sight of Charlie's groom and horses roused him into attention, and he welcomed Thornhill in a good-humoured manner. Charlie rather liked him: though devoid of anything like obsequiousness, he was civil enough, and ordered Fritz to go show the gentleman's groom his stable. He remarked on the badness of the evening, and the loneliness of

the road: railways spoilt his trade; and Charlie ordered a bottle of wine, which the landlord had recommended, and Daly was accommodated in the kitchen. Charlie lit a cigar; and by this time the storm stood over the village, and spent its fury on the road beneath. Both master and man were glad to be indoors.

In the course of half an hour it began to abate, and Charlie went out to the stable-yard to see about resuming his journey. His servant had already commenced tightening the girths, and getting ready the manes and tails of his horses, which required a little straightening after the buffeting of the wind, when the noise of wheels was heard, and there dashed into the yard a carriage and pair of horses, which pulled up suddenly at the porte-cochère. Charlie, impelled by some unusual curiosity, returned towards the house in time to see the door of the calèche opened and the steps let down, while from it descended a strongly-built, powerful man, with red whiskers and beard, lifting rather than lead-

ing a girl, more dead than alive, as white as marble, and down whose cheeks the tears rolled rapidly. I have said that it was become dark; the house was scarcely lighted, yet, as she passed beneath a lamp in the passage, near the door, Charlie was enabled to see a part of a face which he thought he could scarcely have mistaken. Still, how and why here under these circumstances? Could it be she? And what was it to him? What was it to any man situated as he was? Was he the investigator of adventures to the forlorn damsels of Frankfort? Suppose, too, he should have made a mistake!!!

"Sir, bedad here's the bay horse, looking all the worse for his gallop."

"What the deuce do you mean?" said Charlie, abstractedly.

"I mane that the bay horse is here, sir—the one you sold to Baron Hartzstein; and he isn't improved by the leather."

"Are you sure it's the horse? Here, landlord."

"Sir. Excuse me, but you're an Englishman," said the landlord.

"I am. But——"

"There's a lady of your country upstairs has just arrived. She's in great distress. Is there anything wrong? Because, if so——"

"Listen to me, landlord. You know nothing of this?"

"Nothing, upon my honour," said the landlord.

"Nor the name of the man?"

"No."

"Nor the name of the lady?"

"Certainly not."

"How many are there with her?" asked Charlie.

"Two: the master, and his servant, who drove them; both armed."

"How?" said Charlie.

"Pistols," replied Boniface.

"It looks bad. If I can convince you it is as you suspect, will you help me?"

"I will," said the man.

"Have you any fire-arms—a pistol, for instance?"

"One, at your service."

"Have you a boy that can ride to Wetzlar for the gendarmes?"

"Yes, but no horse."

"The Arab is as quiet as a child. Daly, stand by the door of the room we shall show you, without breathing; the landlord will be ready to help: but let us have no scandal, if we can help it. Give me that hunting-crop you have in your hand. Now, landlord, take my card to the lady, who speaks German as well as we do, and ask her to see me."

The landlord ascended the stairs, and Charlie followed. The landlord entered, and closed the door. A smothered conversation ensued, of which, however, Charlie heard but stifled sobs, and a coarse, broad accent, which said, "You know your promise, and you know mine. Your father's life, as well as your own, depends upon it. No,

landlord," added he, "the lady cannot see the gentleman." As the landlord opened the door to retreat, Charlie Thornhill, however, stood before them.

"What is the meaning of this intrusion?" But, before he could answer, the girl, Kathleen Donald—for it was she—threw herself between them, and seizing Charlie's hand, entreated protection in moving terms. "Save me! Save me, Mr. Thornhill! Thank God! I have a friend. I have been deceived into the belief that my father was in danger; that he had sent for me, that I could save him; and, knowing how he needed it, I trusted myself to this villain, who has disclosed himself as the agent of another. Is it possible that he, too, could mean me this wrong?"

"Who and what are you, sir, that you have dared to entrap an English girl into these meshes? Are you so low as to be pander to the Baron Hartzstein?" And Charlie approached nearer to his opponent, whilst he supported Kathleen with his other arm.

"You seem to know something of this business —more than you should know: but by what right do you interfere with the journey of this lady and myself—"

"Nonsense, sir. You hear what she says. Relinquish your claim, and go hence in peace. Avoid further scandal, or it may be worse for you."

"Sit down, then, young lady, or it may chance that I put my threat in execution." The man then drew deliberately a pistol from his breast, and looked at Charlie. "Leave the room, sir. And, faith, be glad ye leave it alive. You have interfered in a most unjustifiable manner in what does not concern any one but this young lady and me. Be advised, and interfere no further."

"In a matter, sir, that concerns every honest man. I know this lady, and her relations with Baron Hartzstein. She claims my protection, and she shall have it. Put up your weapon, and listen to me. The landlord is aware of your business, and has been secured; already the police

have been sent for, to be used if necessary. My servant waits without; and your own, whom I see there, is already well known, and can be identified in Frankfort. Daly!" The groom entered the room, and Charlie Thornhill continued: "Order the horses to be put into the calèche that drove in here half an hour ago: leave the Arab here with the landlord, and attend us on Kosciusko. I hear your servant, sir, is armed: weapons are useless, as he is to drive us back to Frankfort. He will therefore surrender his pistol. Your master will be better pleased that this business should be hushed at once."

I know that this situation is highly dramatic. Scarcely an author of any degree would resist the temptation of a combat, or a murder, or an escape by the window. Most would endeavour to add to the mystery of the evening's entertainment by a bandit landlord, or the sudden appearance of Hartzstein himself. These are very vulgar expedients, and most improbable ones. The reader has already discovered,

perhaps, what we shall tell him. The gentleman concerned knew too well what he was about. His reward might be secured by prudence: it could only be risked at great disadvantage by bravado or resistance. He also understood that three honest men and a hostile woman are more than a match for two rascals, though one of them was a bold villain enough. Charlie's terms were therefore complied with at once; and the betrayer threw himself into a chair with a dogged air, whilst the more humble ruffian placed his undischarged pistol on the table. "Right," said our hero. "Now go and help the landlord with the horses. When they are ready, we are. What are you staring at, Daly?"

"B-u-r-ke!" found its way slowly from between his lips.

"Yes, it is Burke; and I'm not the first man who has been cajoled by a woman. Faith, I give ye joy of your conquest, sir."

The landlord announced the horses; and Charlie, offering his arm to Kathleen, followed

by his servant, proceeded slowly down stairs. The carriage was at the door; the night was again fine, and cooler than before. Daly mounted Kosciusko, and Hartzstein's servant the box; and thus they drove leisurely towards Frankfort.

Arrived in that city, Charlie took his charge at once to her father's house, where they were received without emotion; Mr. and Mrs. Donald imagining only that their daughter was still with Madame Meyerheim. This rendered explanation more difficult than ever. So Charlie, after essaying in vain to render the business intelligible, and not himself quite certain how far Kathleen had acted with imprudence, was at length obliged to give up all attempts at explanation, and to leave the girl to satisfy her father after his departure.

The facts elicited speak for themselves. Kathleen had received a letter from one Burke, hinting darkly at calamity impending over her father. The name of Burke, not unknown to

her, gave sufficient force to the warning. It prayed a meeting on the evening in question, at a late hour, though not yet in darkness, to suggest remedies, in the hands of the girl herself, for some unknown ills. So far she was easily deceived, and went without misgiving. A pretended letter from her father was given her in the twilight. Burke was a practised forger, and she was deceived. Once in Hartzstein's carriage, she was not aroused to the real danger of her situation till she was out of Frankfort and all reach of succour. The reader knows the rest. Her accidental meeting with Charlie, and his recognition of Hartzstein's horse, saved her from danger ; and the influence which Charlie's invariable kindness had wrought for her exerted itself in the happiest moment. Hartzstein was merciless, and, away from other influences, he might have added her to his other victims. Charlie Thornhill had had forty winks in the matter of Kathleen, and his ride woke him.

CHAPTER VII.

CONFESSIONS, LITERARY AND DOMESTIC.

"Und wärest du auch noch so klug, so sei doch bescheiden."
Germ. Prov.

The escapade related in our last chapter had not been so quietly managed but that it had given some cause for scandal. Little, however, of the real truth was known; and perhaps the most prevalent report was the intended elopement of an English governess with a young English banker, now resident in Frankfort; but that they had been caught and brought back by the girl's father. At all events, this version found its way to England; and, some time later, Charlie Thornhill was half-annoyed and half-amused by the necessity of enlightening Lady Marston, which he did: not, however, quite in time to save his own reputation. A little bit of gossip

is a bait at which everybody rises. If it affects the character of one, it is something: and, with a sort of recompensatory charity, a good dab of black paint is supposed to make the other parts look whiter. It redeems the whole man from natural insipidity. If with the one stone, as in the present case, you can kill two birds, by all means have a shy at them. If it does no other good, it will at least make them more cautious for the future. Or, is it that the world, in its honesty, paints man as he would be if he were found out? Probably, after all, what we call detraction is an inherent love of truth; and, knowing what we are ourselves, we feel satisfied that our neighbours are not unlike us. The difference, after all, is in form; the colouring is much the same all the world over.

Like all Germans, or young men living in Germany, Charlie had no cook of his own at his rooms; he had abonné himself at the table d'hôte of the Hôtel de Russie. It had many advantages, not the least of which was the occasional

meeting of an old friend, and the hearing of some English news, in which he was interested. At the present season such things happened daily. Whole families, seeking health, education, or economy: single men, new scenes, or repose from old ones: women, blue stockings, ready to rush into print, or adventuresses into matrimony; and both seeking a foreign subject for the exercise of their powers. And Charlie liked to look at them all. Men who think much talk little: men who think deeply, in their lighter moments talk much. It is a relief to them. Charlie never talked, but he was always observing. His thoughts were many and varied, but ever on the surface. Still, as he was occupied, it was a bore to him to talk on ordinary occasions.

To-day he took his seat, as according to custom, near the top of the table. A Russian general officer, who spoke four languages and drank oceans of champagne, occupied the post of honour at the head. There were the habitués

of the place, like Charlie, and many English. All the girls were more or less good-looking, and excited attention as they entered. Their brothers, emerging from the chrysalis state of Oxford or Cambridge, a regimental mess, the Guards' Club-house, or the Marine Parade, were insipid, straight-nosed, and gentlemanly. There was one exception to this rule, and he was placed next to Charlie. Our friend was attracted first by the perseverance with which the stranger poured, not into his ear, but all over the dinner table, floods of sporting intelligence.

"Know him, Gad! I should think I do; he knows how to run a bye as well as most men," said he to a bald-headed old gentleman, who had been imprudent enough to mention the name of an English nobleman. "There's not a leg that wouldn't have been broke if he'd won the Derby last year." Here the wife of the bald-headed man dropped her knife and fork, and gazed with silent horror at the speaker. The gentleman, however, feeling called upon to say

something, replied—"God bless my soul, you don't say so?"

"Oh! but I do. What a pot it was; he'd have boiled 'em all." Here the company looked up in general, whilst one or two of the younger members sharpened their ears, to see if anything was to be learnt from so distinguished a professor of turf slang. "Here, Kellner," added he, handling a bottle of Rhine wine, which he had ordered at the instigation of the waiter himself; "there, that won't do at all, it's infernally nasty: now, what is really good?"

"We think our Hockheimer a superior wine, sir; or if you would try the Johannisberg—"

"By all means, a bottle of Johannisberg, and mind it *is* good."

Charlie ventured to look at the speaker, as soon as he got his Johannisberg. He found him a stout, short, pasty-faced, unintellectual-looking man, with red hair and whiskers, and an imperial, which he stroked very satisfactorily to himself, and with an air of superiority over the rest of the

company. He had large hands, without energy in them; and a hurried manner of eating, as though he was not accustomed to much time for his dinner. He was, in other respects, a vulgar person: and yet his face seemed familiar to Charlie, as he looked at him. He talked of everybody of note, always speaking of titled people without their titles. "Carabbas, the best fellow alive, mounted me with the Heythrop last winter. The Duke—know him? egad! what a coachman he is." Here he addressed himself directly to his neighbour.

"Do you know Beaufort?"

"I haven't the pleasure," replied Charlie, and he manifestly fell in the estimation of his new acquaintance.

Here many of the diners rose to leave the room, seeing that, unless they put an end to the dinner, the dinner would certainly put an end to them. Charlie took out a cigar; the stranger did the same, and proceeded to qualify the bottle of Johannisberg with tobacco.

"You know that part of the country?" again said the man, with American perseverance.

"I have hunted there occasionally, two or three seasons ago. You seem to be well acquainted with it."

"Indeed I am: charming neighbourhood, and beautiful places all over the county. Now, to my mind, Gilsland: but perhaps you don't know Dacre?"

"Slightly."

"Ah! capital fellow, when you know him intimately. Of course you know Robinson Browne is engaged to be married to one of the girls?"

"Who the devil can this fellow be?" thought Charlie.

"Nothing but his racing propensities, and the dollop he dropped to Thornhill on the match, they say, postponed it. Dacre wouldn't have it at any price. That's the *on dit;* between ourselves, I know better."

"Oh!" said Charlie, with considerable astonishment; and it was all he could say.

"The fact is, the match was a sell: there's no doubt the mare could have won. Of course it wouldn't do to say that; but I wrote a devil of a leader the next week in the 'Evening Gammoner,' which, of course, you saw."

"I beg your pardon——"

"Not at all: very likely you didn't see it; but it was the talk of London for the following week. I gave it them most tremendously about the light-weight handicaps, and the present system of roping."

"And did you see the match yourself?" said Charlie, innocently.

"See it; bless you, no! not I. I just went down to the club, and picked up what I could about it. I really know no more about it than you, except by hearsay. But, you may take your oath what I say is true."

"Undoubtedly," rejoined the other; "and—and—do you write much on these subjects?"

"Yes, every week; almost daily. I'm quite knocked up, really in wretched health; but it's a great thing to lead public opinion. I'm '*The Sphinx.*'"

"Really," said Charlie again, who hardly testified the surprise at the great man's proximity which might have been expected, but which probably arose from his never reading at all.

"Yes, *The Sphinx of the 'Evening Gammoner.'*"

"The Sphinx! That's all about Œdipus, I remember, thanks to Gresham."

"Yes, I'm *Œdipus* in the 'Cockfighter's Chronicle.'"

"What's the use of that?"

"Well, between ourselves, we are able to give one another a lift: and, as we are both prophets, we get four horses instead of two: and when Sphinx is wrong it's hard if Œdipus isn't right."

"That's a good idea," said Charlie, impressed

more strongly with the wit than the honesty of the proceeding: "I never thought of that."

"I dare say not. It don't much matter what a fellow writes, as long as he makes it strong enough. The worst of it is that the 'Chronicle' is a tremendous paper for light weights, short distances, and two-year-old races; and the 'Gammoner' goes in for the breed of horses, the Beacon Course, eleven stone, and all that sort of thing. Kellner, give me another cigar."

"Well, but what do you think about it? Because it seems to me that the 'Gammoner' is right. Racing doesn't do much for the breed of horses, except in quantity," and Charlie was so amused with his companion that he took out a second cigar, and offered one to the Sphinx.

"You see, I know nothing about the merits of the thing; and it can make no difference to me. All I have to do is to keep my ears open; and, unless it's a very bad case, I go for the nobs."

"And what line do the nobs take?" asked simple-minded Charlie.

"They're always honest enough when they haven't a good thing on themselves; and they're boys to halloo when other people are throwing stones. But the truth is, they've done so much in the dairy of late years, that there's no more milk to be had for love or money; and, I think, I know a gentleman or two that daren't look a calf in the face again." Here the Sphinx took a silent pull at his cigar, rolled it round with his finger, and looked inquiringly up at his interrogator. He began to think he had been undergoing the milking process himself, only in a different form.

"Might I ask if you are resident in Frankfort, as you seemed to speak German exceedingly well at dinner?" said Œdipus.

"I am residing in Frankfort, but dine at the table d'hôte daily."

"You're a bit of a sportsman too, I perceive."

"I was when in England: here we have no opportunity."

"I'm going for a little tour, and then to Baden.

They rather expect the races to be something out of the common; as to Benazet, the man's a prince."

"Baden! races at Baden! so there are. I shall be able to get away about that time," said Charlie, rising; "and then, I trust, we shall meet again: at present I must wish you good morning, Mr.—Mr.——"

"Smith, my name's Smith; but everybody knows me."

"And mine Thornhill. I'm a brother of the Thornhill you mentioned some time ago." Smith turned blue: "Good God, what a fool I am!" said he, as Charlie walked quietly down the steps of the *salle à manger*; "that's the very fellow that rode the race: I thought I'd seen him before."

"What a pretty blackguard that is to direct public opinion, as he calls it," said Charlie to himself. "I thought I'd seen him before."

A few days after this, it occurred to Charlie that he ought to inquire after Miss Donald. If

he had not been rather conscious of liking her, he would have done so before. Since the evening he had returned with her to Frankfort she had not been at Madame Meyerheim's; and her health was the natural plea for absence. Some curious rumours had reached the ears of that little woman; but she had unbounded faith in Charlie, and refused to believe even the gossip of her most good-natured friends. This was unreasonable; and she denied herself much pleasure, it is to be confessed, for the sake of the quondam inmate of her home. What is still more extraordinary, she dared to form her own opinion on the case of her children's governess, and had not yet sentenced that delinquent to unqualified dismissal.

"Now, Mr. Thornhill," said she, on the day in question, blushing a little, as being altogether too young and good-looking to put such a question, and yet owning, even to herself, a considerable advance on Charlie's time of life. "Now, Mr. Thornhill, *sehen sie mal*, will you tell me the

truth about my governess, Miss Donald, whom I love almost like a daughter?"

"What! they've been talking about it then, have they?" said Charlie, and his good-humoured face looked as coolly unconscious as if he had been talking about American freedom, or any other nonentity to which the world had given a name.

"Of course they have: that's not very remarkable. But I want to hear the truth; and perhaps I shan't get it if I listen to the women."

"Possibly not, madam;" and, as Charlie was still rather shy of his own voice, he blushed too, but he managed to tell his story, and to exonerate the girl entirely, which, indeed, was not difficult to do.

"I'm glad to know the truth: poor girl!" and the good-natured lady dropped a tear on her black silk dress, which she carefully wiped off the next minute. "What a pretty story Baroness von Holtzäpfel would make of this if she knew it: she's as jealous of Kathleen as can

be, and in love with Hartzstein herself." Then Charlie took his hat, and his leave, and his way towards Römerberg, and the dark street behind the Cathedral.

When he reached the house he was left to find his way to the door on the second étage by himself; and here an inferior-looking servant, with nothing neat about her but her hair, opened the outer door. Charlie found himself almost at once in the presence of Mrs. Kildonald and her husband. He was kindly received, but with evident restraint. "Miss Donald was not well; her nerves had received a shock; but in a few more days she would return to Madame Meyerheim, who was kindness itself, and had written the nicest note, giving her any length of absence necessary." Kildonald himself was evidently a great invalid. Charlie looked at his handsome, delicate features, which wore the marks of suffering and irritability: and he saw, with pain, his attenuated frame and hands, one of which seemed almost useless, as it lay pas-

sively along the arm of his invalid chair. He had a way too of stroking it with the other hand, whether from hope of alleviation or mere habit it were difficult to say. Kildonald had hitherto failed to recognise in Charlie the handsome stranger who had given him a helping arm on the night of his encounter with Burke. Charlie had suspected his protégé on the previous visit, though hurried, short, and by candlelight: now he was sure of him.

"Did you say 'Thornhill,' Norah — Mr. Thornhill?" asked he, and a curious shade, almost a spasm, as of a painful recollection, passed over the invalid's face.

"Yes, Arthur, Mr. Thornhill, of whom you have heard Kathleen speak so often, but to whom we scarcely expected to lie under such an obligation! Ah! sir, my husband's health is not what it was, or we should have thanked you more heartily, as poor Kathleen would have wished." Mrs. Kildonald rose hastily to conceal her tears, and left the room. There was a dreadful sense

of oppression on Charlie's mind. The circumstances of the case came painfully upon him; but, more than all, an appearance of poverty and suffering, which seemed to be unusual, and unfitted to the aristocratic manner of Kildonald and the beauty of his wife. The room was bare of furniture, more even than is usual in the larger cities of Germany. A few books on a side table and a piano constituted its whole ornamental arrangement; and an empty stove, in lieu of a cheerful English fireplace, is not calculated to give an impression of cheerfulness where other adjuncts are wanting. So Charlie sat for a moment, bearing the somewhat inquisitorial glance of his host.

"Thornhill—Thornhill; yes, certainly like, but not strikingly so. But——. You're Mr. Thornhill of Thornhills? Forgive my abruptness; but there are circumstances connected with that name which attract me irresistibly, and —and—I'm sure you'll forgive me." Kildonald spoke with some hesitation of manner, as though

anxious to say something, and yet not knowing how to begin.

"My brother is Mr. Thornhill of Thornhills."

"You must have been young; very. Excuse me; but you may recollect, you must have heard something in connection with—with—the melancholy circumstances of the late Mr. Thornhill's death?" Here Kildonald turned away his head, and the colour mounted to his temples.

"Everything, I believe," said Charlie, who thought this the safest termination to what might be a disagreeable revelation.

"You know me, then? Ah! I was to blame: I was mistaken. We all have much to regret; but I was in a net. My eyes have lately been opened. I thought Geoffrey Thornhill my enemy; I was my own. I would have slain him, sir, in fair fight, it is true, but not like a dog. There has been foul wrong done—forgery; and both have been robbed by that scoundrel Burke." Here the sick man rose, and the flushed face and trembling limbs told of energy too great for an

enfeebled frame. "If there's a God in heaven, he shall suffer for it. I was duped, deluded. I was persuaded that your father had eaten my birthright; and I thought myself justified in my revenge. But I have since learnt all. And forgive me, Mr. Thornhill."

"You are under a delusion, Mr. Donald."

"Kildonald, sir, is my name; Kildonald. You must have heard it. I would have killed your father, and you have restored to me my daughter. That's Heaven's retribution. And how——"

Charlie rose. "You recur to very painful subjects. I have before heard much of what you say. I believe punishment awaits the guilty man, even in this world, and at this distance of time. But excuse me, if I seek no disclosures, but such as can be, and will be, used unscrupulously and unconditionally." The fact is, that Charlie was so unprepared for the outburst he had just heard, that he was by no means certain how far Kildonald intended to criminate himself.

"Stay, Mr. Thornhill; there are some things

you must hear still." Here the flush passed from Kildonald's cheek; he collected himself, ran his hand over his forehead, and appeared to think for a minute or two; then became more quiet; and finally relapsed into apparent indifference. He spoke of the property which had been bought by Mr. Thornhill, but which had never been paid for. He admitted the injustice he had done Charlie's father in believing him to be his debtor; late events had shown Burke to be the recipient of these rents, and to have defrauded both parties. He hoped to be able to prove it; but his information was vague, and his energies gone.

Charlie replied to these confessions by inquiries which assisted his own views, but he received no confirmation of his own suspicions, so he kept them to himself. He had little doubt that the mystery would one day be cleared up, and he did not feel inclined to risk anything by premature explanations. He kept his own counsel: not always an easy thing to do.

Kildonald was a vain man, not a proud one, and his mind was weakened by illness. This induced him to tell Charlie a certain amount of the truth. He was to blame in his quarrel with Geoffrey Thornhill; but few men could have humiliated themselves sufficiently to have confessed all. He satisfied his conscience and his gratitude by a half-measure of justice; but he did not say, "I hated your father because he was acute enough to detect me, and bold enough to denounce me; and I would have shot him, because he was a bar to my advancement in fashionable life." He did not detail the miserable transaction in which he had been involved, and which led to the quarrel; but he placed all to the account of his hatred of the man who would have bought his estate and supplanted him in his reputation and position as a landholder and a gentleman. Two men only could have told the truth, and nothing but the truth—the sincere penitent, or the utterly degraded; and Kildonald was neither the one nor the other.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

"Fama, malum, quo non aliud velocius ullum
Mobilitate viget."—VIRG. *Æn.* IV.

IN a few days, Kathleen Kildonald, as I may now call her, was back at the Meyerheims', and Charlie was occupied, as usual, at the bank. No one, to have seen and conversed with that undemonstrative gentleman, would have imagined the match he carried about with him ready to explode the train he had laid at any moment, and yet retaining it till he should be sure that the explosion would be followed by the proposed effect. In England, indeed, in certain circles he furnished a subject for club gossip and dinner-table conversation, and shone not in a light so amiable as could be wished.

"Well, Towler, that's a rum go of Charlie Thornhill's in Frankfort; such a deuced quiet

fellow, too: much more like his brother Tom." The speaker stood on the steps of the Guards' Club House, and addressed himself to a brother officer of remarkably doggy appearance on the step below.

"Demme, it's always your quiet fellows that do the mischief. Look at me." Whether Mr. Towler meant that he was a quiet, mischievous person, or an example of irregular but irreproachable virtue, is doubtful.

"But, dash it! fancy bolting with the governess, and being brought back together in triumph by the lover, who rode beside the carriage, with a loaded pistol to his ear. Besides, I thought he was engaged to one of Dacre's sisters?"

"Oh! that's off long ago. He was scratched as soon as they found he'd got no money from Henry Thornhill," chimed in young Foozleton. "They want money; the market's tight at Gilsland."

"What became of old Thornhill's money, do you suppose?"

"Left it all to the Lying-in Hospital, because Tom wouldn't give up racing."

"It's not true that the girl is the daughter of the man that murdered his father, is it?" said the first speaker.

"No, not exactly that; but there was some story about his being under the surveillance of the police some time back. Hartzstein saw him coming out of the Polizei, or whatever they call the place, with a gens-d'arme after him who sleeps in the porter's lodge."

"Poor Charlie!" said Towler; "that's more mysterious than agreeable." And they went their way.

"Mary Stanhope," said Mrs. Thornhill, "what is this story about Charlie that they say Edward Dacre brought from Frankfort, about some governess?"

"Probably some horrible falsehood, if it's found its way about London. The truth remains so long at the bottom of the well that it gets drowned altogether."

"But what is it that they said at Lady Sarah Screamersdale's ?"

"Nothing that you need fret about. Only that Charlie had fallen in love with a beautiful girl, a governess in Frankfort, and that——. Well—the natural consequence had ensued."

"And who said that, I should like to know?" said Mrs. Thornhill, who honoured chastity in man as well as woman, and was most unfashionably angry. "I don't believe a word of it. I suppose it was that scandalous old Mrs. Barnacles, whose own son carried off that poor girl from Lady Hemingford's. Anything else, I wonder ?"

"Yes, plenty; they finished the story satisfactorily. They said that he was seen in the carriage with her in the evening; that she had mysteriously disappeared, and not been heard of since; and that he takes a long ride out of Frankfort every evening."

"And do you believe a word of it, Mary?"

"Not one syllable," said Mary Stanhope: "he

would rather cut his hand off. So let's go to bed, dear. Come along." And they did not believe it; but there were others who did.

The truth is, Edward Dacre was not very strong-minded, and, though a very good fellow, had unwittingly done some mischief. First, knowing nothing about Charlie's *penchant* for his sister, beyond that of a boyish fancy, he told a friend of hers of the pretty Irish girl at Frankfort, and of Charlie's attentions, as insinuated by Hartzstein and de Weiler. Then his friend mentioned the staid Charlie's peccadillo, as something to laugh at, at the club. Then two or three old chums of Thornhill pretended to be much amused by it, and carried the news home to their wives. These wives told other wives, until it came round to Mrs. Dacre's ears; and Teddy was fain to admit something like the truth of Charlie's attachment in the presence of his sisters. The position of Edith and Charlie was just of that nature that nothing could be said upon the subject to her; and yet nobody's mouth

was stopped by it. She was a sort of *fiancée* by courtesy among her intimates; but it was a courtesy which no man or woman was bound to respect. It affected her spirits to a certain extent; for one thing, and one thing only, startling enough in all conscience, led her to believe in the possibility of his desertion. She looked forward to the death of Henry Thornhill as altering her position; but when it came unexpectedly, she had a right to expect that her lover would have claimed her openly, and have acknowledged their engagement before the world. She knew nothing of the circumstances of the case, and her conjectures were natural enough. And now she was beset on all sides, and if not an unbeliever, at least perplexed with doubts.

But Charlie had a firm friend at court. Alice Dacre knew him, and upheld him. "Don't throw away your happiness upon idle reports, Edith. Depend upon it there is something of which we know nothing. Charlie's character is worth a great deal of London gossip; and according

to Teddy's own account, he didn't even see him."

"But why hasn't he spoken to dear papa? And how long does he expect one to wait, now that there can be no further need of delay?" And Edith Dacre pouted a little.

"Never mind. If you love Charlie Thornhill, trust him."

"Ah! it's all very well, dear Alice, to say 'Never mind;' but you don't quite understand the feeling."

"Perhaps not," rejoined Alice with a very heavy sigh. "But I won't give my troth till I can trust; and then mountains should not shake me."

Charlie himself was at this time unconscious of the construction to be put upon his silence. He argued simply thus:—If I propose now, I have nothing to offer; and I don't wish to risk a refusal, which her father would be fully justified in giving. He was, besides, quite honest in leaving her to accept any other offer. But Charlie was little versed in women, and did not well

consider how happy they are in such silken bonds, or what a disadvantage it is to them to be so. One other motive deterred him—the obligations the family, and especially the girl herself, lay under to him personally. And though he knew the value of such honest love as his own, he would not put Mr. Dacre in the awkward position of saying "Yes," from a sense of gratitude to the preserver of his child. He believed in Edith: and he would take his chance and wait.

About the same time there came a bundle of letters and papers from England. Diver had done wonders, and, with the assistance of the police, was hunting his foxes beautifully. It was hard work when their lines diverged, as they had done, one in London and the other in America; but the lines were coming together again, and pretty quickly. Charlie had been wisely silent, excepting to the right people, and his conjectures had proved all but conclusive. Burke was still wanted: his tool was safe at hand, and already gone to ground. So Charlie put the finishing

touch to his previous information by detailing as much of his own adventure as he thought fit, and some desultory portions of his conversation with Kildonald; and Mr. Diver was not long in getting that excellent hound Bradhall the detective upon the scent; and that gentleman appeared in Frankfort itself before very long, as we shall see.

Amongst the newspapers was one which Charlie opened with some degree of curiosity, "The Cockfighter's Chronicle," not because he felt particularly interested that week in the Liverpool weights, or the last deposit of Mace and the Unknown, or the explanation of the last Deerfoot swindle, or Billy the rat-dog, or Captain Jones's testimonial as the great amateur runner of the day, but because he saw a paragraph most portentously streaked with black marks for his especial information. It was signed "Œdipus," though, as that interesting *littérateur* was on the Continent for the good of his health, it could hardly come from him. "Something pleasant, however, from some d——d good-natured friend,

I suppose," said Charlie, lighting a cigar. And sitting down by an open window, he read a startling announcement.

It exceeded the ordinary gossip of one of the most talented reporters of the sporting news of the day. After relating, with considerable humour, his visit to the various haras of the Continent, his opinion of the modern system of French breeding, and making many very pertinent remarks on the men and manners which were by no means new to him, he proceeded to speak of the various fashionables who were at that time enjoying themselves, and getting rid of their time and their money at Homburg, Wiesbaden, Spa, and Ems; and he naturally enough, and without the slightest *malice prepense*, but rather in a cheerful, gossipping manner, arrived at Frankfort. The pleasure of introducing Charlie was too great, and he finished a very excellent article in the following memorable words :—

"We were so fortunate as to meet with Mr.

Charles Thornhill, a sportsman of the very first water, and so celebrated as a horseman in our own country. It will be no mean gratification to the friends of that gentleman to learn that there is no truth in the reports which were so prevalent of his compulsory absence from Frankfort, but that he is about to be united to a lady of ancient Milesian family and of great personal beauty. We can only trust that one so capable of adorning society will return to his own country, of which his brother, Mr. Thornhill, of Thornhills, is so distinguished an ornament.

"ŒDIPUS."

At the first perusal of this article, Charlie was inclined to be much amused. Then he got to the conclusion, and saw himself. And a very pretty object he appeared. What, in the name of fortune, were these reports? Nothing creditable at least; and no man appreciated the value of an honest name more highly than Charles Thornhill. He had his own ideas of a gentleman —peculiar perhaps, but by temperament or edu-

cation he had a sense of the true metal in distinction from the false. Curious suspicions took a more palpable form as he watched the eddying wreaths of smoke that curled slowly from his mouth, and he felt called upon to determine on some course of action, he did not very well know what. He was not impulsive—that we very well know—or he would have written to Edith Dacre a denial of the whole business. He had plenty of what the world calls friends, but he knew the difference between a Greenwich dinner and a troublesome service; so he did not trouble them. His ideas, at length, resolved themselves into two courses. He wrote a letter to Lady Marston, and he swore to horsewhip Mr. Smith whenever he could catch him: and Charlie was to be accounted a man of his word.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MODERN SQUIRE'S TEMPTATIONS.

"Now black, and deep, the night begins to fall,
A shade immense!"—THOMSON'S *Seasons*.

AND what had Tom Thornhill been doing since he left Como and Naples? He had been living on good intentions in half the capitals in the world, and occasionally indulging in the luxury of very deep play to make up for lost time. It seemed as though a card, or a bet, or a speculation had for him a species of fascination, such as we see exercised by the electro-biologist over weak minds. "You must come to me, sir; you can't resist; come you must." And then you saw the veins swell, and the hands fixed, and the muscles rigid; and just as you begin to delight in the disappointment of the empiric, behold! the

muscles relax, the glued feet are loosened, and the patient does not walk or stagger, but rushes with frantic violence towards his master. Paris, Vienna, London, and half the fashionable towns in England, had triumphed in their turn. He had shut himself up for days, and debarred himself of all possibility of temptation. Miserable and out of spirits, he strolled from the Hôtel Bedford to the Boulevards. "Hallo, Carlingford, how came you here?" and in one moment he was the Tom Thornhill of Oxford, of Melton, and of London once more. He became the noisiest of the noisy; the universal favourite; nor could he drag himself away again to his solitary apartment from the charming little dinner or supper with Mademoiselle Aspasie and her lovely friend of the Rue St. Honoré. Who so gay, who so entertaining as M. Dornhill! And how he spoke French! His grammar did not stand criticism, but his manner, his accent, his voice, and even his blunders were the fashion. "De Rougemont," said Carlingford, "my friend

Thornhill: Thornhill, the Duc de Rougemont, premier chasseur de France. The duc is a veritable Englishman in the matter of horseflesh, and will be proud to be instructed by the best man in Melton." Then Tom forgot his virtue and his misery together, and became more reckless still. Had it ended with his little dinners or suppers—well; Alice might have reigned supreme; but they played: de Rougemont with the violent *abandon* of a Frenchman, with whom nothing is comparable, as a gambler, but a modern Russian or an Irishman, before the introduction of prudence by the union; Carlingford with the happy indifference of an English noble of endless wealth; and Thornhill with a determination of backing his ill luck, which set all bounds at defiance. On one occasion, indeed, he was found (upon a short visit to London to raise money, when no one was in town, and when Arlington Street was up, pavement and all) to have steeped himself in a great City speculation in molasses, and which came off

in a fortnight with a trifling loss of ten thousand, which had to be raised on the estate.

Vienna was even worse than Paris. There he had some chance, as he was a capital whist-player, and, but for sheer ill-luck, must have stood his ground. Not so in the Austrian capital. There he had no chance. The women made love to him, and, as it was impossible to pay in kind, he compromised matters by losing his hundreds with singular grace. To tell the truth, most of them accepted the compromise without much difficulty, and liked the notes they received quite as well as the *billets doux* they professed to look for. What is to be done with a determined countess, still young, and a victim of *la belle passion*, who is known to suffer at home from incompatibility of temper, and "proposes" with a satin slipper on the top of your pet corn? To win her money is to waste your time: to lose your own keeps up a wholesome excitement, and saves your conscience. He was beset, too, by *lionnes* of every description, who rode with him,

shot with him at the *tir au pistolet*, played billiards, and smoked cigarettes; and he was eventually chased out of Vienna by a desperate old woman, who was not satisfied without having his money and his love too. The men were delighted with him, of course; for he rode their horses, drank their wines, gave excellent dinners, and, though the best-dressed man in Vienna, was so far removed from the military style in vogue that he excited no jealousy whatever.

In England the breaking up of his stud was supposed to have curtailed his racing expenses considerably, if it did nothing towards diminishing his passion for the turf. Never was so mistaken a notion.

"Thank God, Tom Thornhill has at length been persuaded to give up his racing establishment!" said old Dacre to Corry, whom he met on the steps of White's as he was sauntering down St. James's Street in the spring of the year: "that has been the ruin of him. He's one of the finest fellows alive, but so enthusiastic

about his own horses that, with a thousand pounds a day, he must have been ruined had he gone on."

"Ah! his poor father was very much like him, but married young, and it saved him. But don't imagine that your friend Tom is cured of his mania. He's just as enthusiastic about his friends' horses now as he was about his own; and what's worse, he hasn't the management of them. I have just heard him back a horse of Carlingford's for the Derby, that has no more chance of winning than you or I, only because Boldthrow called him a leggy brute, which he is, and only intended for a book-horse, which he is not. He certainly is the most inveterate gambler I ever knew. The night before he went abroad he told us all, rather solemnly, that he had given up play of every kind, and that he had determined upon never betting another hundred as long as he lived. We were bold enough to doubt his self-denial, upon which he at once offered to lay 500*l.* to 400*l.* about it instantly, and did not

seem to consider his offer as a singular entry in the first line of the new leaf he had just turned over."

Corry had no idea of Dacre's feelings, or the interest he felt in the subject of their conversation, or the former might have withheld his information. But an English gentleman stands any kind of skinning, from a tight boot to the scalping-knife, and old Mr. Dacre bore it as one of his order. But he went home sorely oppressed, and he swore again a round oath that, with his consent, Tom Thornhill should never have his daughter: he would rather see her in her grave. It was a superfluous figure of speech as the world goes, but he was speculating, unwittingly, upon a strength of feeling which might have presented the alternative as the only one. A broken heart is not a common termination to a fashionable career; and unsuccessful love in the higher circles is met by so many remedies, that the most virulent form of the disease is seldom fatal. They take it lightly in the Upper Ten Thousand,

whether from early inoculation or from the coolness of temperature to which they are habitually subject, I cannot say. Still, broken hearts are known; and Alice Dacre was fighting a cruel fight on the side of her principles. Victory would be a terrible loss if it came short of life.

I need hardly say that rumour was not silent as to the course of profligacy on which Tom Thornhill had entered. His debts and embarrassments had long been the talk of the clubs; and, though every one spoke of them with a sigh, nobody seemed inclined to settle them. Thornhills was deeply mortgaged; but his mother continued to live in it with Mary Stanhope. Tom himself came down with a party of men occasionally for a few days' shooting, but he had forgotten, what he once so loved to dream of, the responsibilities of a country gentleman. At present they consisted of a grand battue: six guns and the rustic population of two villages; three or four keepers and four hundred head, twice in the year. Then he was in Paris, and not heard

of for a month. Suddenly he emerged, and again his old familiar cry was heard, cheerful as when a boy, "I've laid 400 to 300, and by G— he don't win: yes he does; no, yes, no; beat on the post: like my luck."

In the midst of it all, nobody saw that he was older: they saw nothing but the same cheerful spirits which had made him the life of every society into which he went. They never watched him half an hour after old Stripp, the steward, had been with him, or after a long-deferred interview with his man of business, or when he was calculating at how far short of forty per cent. his last 10,000*l.* was borrowed. They never saw him throw himself into a chair opposite the dying embers of his fire when, with his usual good-nature, he had ordered his valet not to sit up for him. There he sat watching, in his mind's eye, the form of her he loved, and knew that every day placed a fresh impediment and a greater distance between them. Then he thought how few years back he could have led her from her father's

home to a house replete with every comfort, a companion for his widowed mother, to have shared the love and respect to which he could not be blind. How would his tenantry and dependents have loved her, first for his sake, and then for her own, while she dispensed the hospitality she was so well calculated to adorn. And what a heaven upon earth might his home have been; and now what was it? Diminished means had taken him from its shelter, and a hard struggle made it barely consistent with the comfort and position of his mother and good Mary Stanhope. The world saw nothing of this; but Tom Thornhill acknowledged to himself that his spirits and his glitter were as false as the last bright glare of the flame which makes the coming darkness more sad, or the nodding plumes and glittering baubles which conceal the shroud within.

The world, too, in its goodnature, did not always spare him. Some said his experience, which he had bought so dearly, was beginning to serve him; that he was beginning to know how

to take care of himself. Fast men and fast women still adhered to him: they believed in him as of old. At all events he was not nearly as bad as they; and men do admire sometimes what is very inconvenient to imitate. But the Dacres heard rumours, and were not in a position to contradict or to sound them.

"Poor Tom Thornhill!" said his friend Harlington. "I'm deuced sorry for that fellow: he lost a heavyish stake on the Cambridgeshire."

"Poor Tom Thornhill!" said Lady Montagu Mastodon. "I've no patience with him. If it had been some of you empty-headed fellows, I should have had some sympathy to throw at you; but a clever man, with more than a fair share of sense and principle, to have walked with his eyes open into such a mess, I've no patience with him. Madness can be his only excuse, and then he ought to be locked up. Is Thornhills to be sold, then?"

"It must come to the hammer, unless he has such a *coup* as was never heard of before." And

here Harlington took a pinch of Prince's mixture, a vice of a bygone aristocracy.

"And what's he going to do next? Why in the world didn't his brother come into the world before him? Providence don't know its business, unless the transfer of old hereditary property is part of it."

"Thornhill, you'd better come to Baden," said Lord Carlingford.

"Baden? so I will. I shall go mad if I stop here. When shall we start? to-morrow?"

"Not exactly; but we'll be off next week, if you like."

"Very good: the sooner the better." And to Baden they went, viâ Antwerp and Heidelberg, while their studs were being got ready for November.

Alice Dacre said nothing, not a word. To whom should she talk? Edith could not have understood her. It's a sad thing to worship a broken idol, and to know that it is broken. Her head was not bowed; but nature asserted her

sway, and she was declining. Still she struggled on. A warmer climate was recommended, and they started slowly for an Italian winter. Tom had her heart, and he was breaking it. But shall not a man do what he will with his own?

As Charlie sat reading the "Allgemeine Zeitung," that is, pretending to look for the money column, one morning the door opened, and the servant introduced a person without a name, but, understanding each other, the ceremony was omitted by mutual consent. The individual in question, who presented himself and his own card, was so far remarkable as to be the very least remarkable person in the world. I never saw any one so utterly undistinguished from hundreds of others as Mr. Bradhall. He was neither short nor tall, plain nor ugly, well dressed nor badly dressed; and I hardly think any one, under the rank of a royal duke, would have recognized him under a third or fourth visit. How his mother ever knew him, if his brothers or sisters——however, he must have been an only child: there lay

the great secret of his success. And this characteristic *inidentity* extended to his clothes. His hat was like every other hat, a great difficulty in these days of capital latitudinarianism. His clothes were just no way extraordinary: indeed anybody, in looking at them, if he had thought at all about them, would have believed either that the man was made for them, or that the clothes would have been equally becoming to himself. I rather think this latter would have been the prevailing idea. I know it was mine. His nose appeared straight. I don't know that it was not slightly *retroussé* after all. I never met any one who could tell whether his hair curled or not; and his eyes—oh! by the way, his eyes had a peculiarity, and Charlie Thornhill discovered it: they did not wink. The constant habit of looking wickedness straight in the face, and through and through, had baked them, hardened them to such an extent that moisture was thrown away upon them: they stared iniquity clean out of countenance.

"Pray sit down, Mr. Bradhall," said Charlie, reading from the card, and then waiting. Mr. Bradhall did sit down, but not precisely on the middle of his chair: at the same time he dived cautiously into a breast-pocket of his coat, and produced a letter, which he handed over to his host with as much care as if it were a cocked revolver.

"From Mr. Diver," said Charlie, once more reading the few lines. "Your's is a hard life, Mr. Bradhall."

"Sometimes. The present job has been tolerably easy, but we have suddenly missed our man from Baden or Frankfort, and without any apparent reason."

"And you are led to believe that I can assist you?"

"You or your servant;" and Bradhall drew from his pocket again a small note-book. "He is under the surveillance of the city police, by whose order I am unable to discover——"

"If you mean my Irish servant——"

"Just so, sir; Donovan, *alias* Heenan, *alias* Daly."

"I put him there myself."

"It does you infinite credit, sir. He is one of those men who once committed, or assisted at, a great crime, and it frightened him: he's been quiet enough for years; but he's not the man I want: he's perfectly safe, and to be had at any moment."

"Then who is it you do want, Mr. Bradhall, if the question involves no indiscretion?"

"We want Burke, and we must have him. We shall put you to some inconvenience, for we must take Daly when the time comes. We are not quite clear what part he played; but he knows enough to make a valuable witness, and he must become king's evidence. Can you help us any further in the matter of Burke?"

"I think I can; and, if you want him, you will find him at Baden Race-course this day fortnight: he goes to lose a race on a horse that, if fairly ridden, must win; and gentlemen-riders of

that class are not so common here as in England." Charlie then told Mr. Bradhall of his own adventure, in which Burke figured so conspicuously; his servant's accidental recognition of him, and involuntary pronunciation of the name; his own conjectures, and of his information given to Diver; of his suspicions of Daly not destroyed by his uniform honesty and good conduct, and of his precaution in placing him under the eye of the police. "And now should you like to see him?"

"It would be desirable," said Mr. Bradhall, "on more accounts than one."

Charlie rang the bell, and desired Daly to be sent up with a small tray and a bottle of niersteiner. He could then give his orders about the horses.

"There," said he, when his orders had been obeyed, and Daly had been some minutes in the room, "that's the man."

"I know him now; and how long have you suspected him of being concerned in

the unhappy murder of the late Mr. Thornhill?"

"Since my last visit to England."

"And you've held your tongue; and he suspects nothing?"

"Nothing whatever."

"Excuse me, sir, but what a detective you would have made!"

CHAPTER X.

BADEN BADEN.

"Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück
Ich habe gelebt und geliebet."

I REGARD it as a privilege to have seen Baden in the winter—in her undress, in fact. It cost me neither the bowing and scraping employed in approaching the private boudoir of a great lady, nor the hard fighting in the waiting-rooms of St. James's Palace to the reception-room of my sovereign. Still it is a privilege. I suppose those linden trees never occur to the ordinary visitor as sometimes laden with glittering, diamond-like icicles, or some of the beauties of those hanging woods round the Alten Schloss as heightened by the chaste covering of winter. Men who feast on truffles and the chefs-d'œuvre of an artiste like Ude find a difficulty in imagining the plea-

sures of a sirloin *au naturel*. Baden is not an amphitheatre of natural beauty to the habitué of that region of luxury: it is rather an amphitheatre of footlights, fireworks, orange-peel, and playbills, the whole concluding with a general insight into the nature of blue-lights and pandemonium. As to a wet day in that place out of season I can say nothing, no one having yet survived it. A veil is properly drawn over so awful a spectre. And yet it is exceedingly beautiful, independently of its attractions. Just as some fair corpse lies more hallowed in its rest without the spirit, when that spirit has been of evil. In the whole of the Black Forest scarcely one spot possesses more natural beauties. Its groves, its walks, its lindens, and its gardens; its pine-clad hills, its ruins, its historical and legendary interest; even its buildings, its magnificent hotels, its palatial salons, require not the demons of criminal luxury or baleful passion to give them intrinsic value. Seen with unprejudiced eyes, this little spot has claims upon our regard which

far outweigh those which bring the votaries of pleasure from far and near to drown conscience or ennui in the streams of sensual indulgence or sordid avarice. But autumn comes, and with her wand veils the beauty of summer in the mists of enchantment. Nature vanishes as Circe seats herself upon her German throne, and the art and science of luxury and vice reign supreme.

Nothing of this kind occurred to Charles Thornhill as he entered Baden Baden on a lovely afternoon of September, 18—. This young man had his faults, and an absence of poetry, imagination, and refinement was among them. He had been accustomed to take the world as he found it, but not to moralize upon its condition. I dare say the reader likes him as well as most men of his or her acquaintance: I do myself. But his virtues were rather those of accident and constitution. His mind was something not unlike his body: it was stalwart, upright, manly. His courage was the basis of what the world

called his principles. He was never afraid from a boy; so he always spoke the truth, and acted upon his convictions. It is not in the nature of some men to be mean; and all vice is mean if examined by strict canon. As, for instance, Charlie never gambled; but he hardly knew why. It never occurred to him as wrong or vicious in others. He forgot any command as to "covetousness," or whence it came; but he thought it ungenerous to win from poor men; and a sort of prudence, worldly if you will, bid him beware of trusting an earthen vessel in company with iron pots; and so on, with all the excesses he avoided. As he drove to the Hôtel Stephanie Bad he said to himself, "Charming, monstrous pretty, these villas, and trees, and gardens, and the little trickling trout-stream." As a group of gamblers descended the steps of the Kursaal, "Fools," said he: "with zero and après in favour of the table, they must lose in the long run." Indeed, if he condemned vice and folly in himself, it is very doubtful whether he was as severe to them

in the abstract. So he came to play his part at Baden Baden, and to enjoy what he cared to enjoy of its frivolities. I am sorry for my female readers, because they are apt to make a hero of such an one as Charlie, and now their idol, which they imagined to be of gold, is found to be only clay.

"Rooms here?" said Charlie, alighting from a yellow calêche amidst a flourish of whips from his yellow-coated postilion. The waiter feared not. "Send the landlord to speak to me." Herr Tischtuch appeared. "Have you room for me here?"

"Not a hole in Baden. Most distinguished English lords have been sent away, and the Furst von Bolsöver is just gone on in despair towards Darmstadt."

"Is Mr. Thornhill arrived? I expected to meet him."

"Not yet; but we have rooms for him—two bed-rooms and a salon."

"Well, then, take off the luggage. I am his

brother, and the second room is for me." Charlie opened the door and jumped out.

"Monsieur will show his passport;" and he did so.

"That is good; and the Herr Brother will arrive?"

"To-day," said Charlie. "My horses are here: my servant came yesterday."

"Ach! forgive me, of course. Your horses are here, and all is right." At that moment Tom Thornhill drove up, and as Charlie's empty carriage made way for more flourishes of the whip, the brothers greeted one another affectionately. "This is delightful."

"Looking so well, Charlie; banking agrees with you—does with most people. Money passes through your hands; that's pleasant enough: still better when it sticks." These disjointed fragments were the most commercial Tom had ever been known to utter. "Now let us go upstairs. Waiter, send up those portmanteaus. Dinner at seven, Herr Tischtuch. How

are the daughters? And don't forget the ice."

"Young Mr. Thornhill don't want icing: he looks cool enough." And Tischtuch trotted off bent on obliging a favourite customer.

Tom and his brother dined *al fresco*, or nearly so, under a roof, but with open doors and windows looking on to the cheerful gardens, rippling stream, alleys, and hanging woods. Now, at seven P.M., the whole place was studded with tables of various sizes; some to accommodate a happy and mysterious couple, who were evidently not desirous of extending the circle of their acquaintance; some for a *parti quarré*, whose roistering mirth and joviality courted attention and greeting from all their neighbours, and whose ambition, if to blush at all, was certainly not to do so unseen. Here and there longer tables were laid, where a mixed company—half a dozen men of the fast Parisian lot, and a couple of young ladies whose toilettes were as loud as their manners—were discussing men, women,

and racing, past, present, and to come, with all the gusto which temporary excitement, and minds above or below all criticism, invariably give. The constant popping of champagne corks, and the snatches of song from the mellow lips of a beauty of the Palais Royal, mingled with every dialect of every tongue, from the purest Gallic to the most sonorous Gaëlic, French, German, English, and the Irish of our own reporter, who is conversing with Mrs. Machash on the probable effect of a glass of whisky punch in place of that "nasty wathery drink that promotes the growth of sore throats and internal hæmorrhage;" while she is only thinking of that "ojous woman in all them lappets and white lace," and wondering how she should astonish the natives with her best bonnet from Cork, whose distinguishing characteristic was scarlet and yellow trimmings and a double poppy, which stood up like a sentinel to keep watch over the rest of the finery. A bow-window added considerably to the general confusion, where it was understood that an English

milord, who was always borrowing money of the croupier, and breaking the bank with it, entertained a mixed party of Russian princes and demi-monde; while old Tischtuch and his waiters rushed in and out, and up and down the steps of the alcove, in a state of perspiration and bewilderment as if the house was on fire.

"Good hock, Charlie?"

"Excellent, if that fellow had not iced it. But he's a Frenchman. They understand nothing but champagne, which is very like themselves."

"You don't like the French," said Tom, draining his glass.

"Not much, I confess. What a noisy set they are! Look at that woman, Tom, and that idiot sharing her plate, and wearing her hat."

"That's one of the first men in Paris, Charlie —a rising man at the Chamber, and one of the best fellows out: that's De Clermont."

"And what's the man on the other side of that pretty woman, shying pellets of bread across the table? There'll be a row in a minute or two."

"That's—oh! I forget his name—attaché to the French Embassy at Vienna."

"He looks a diplomatist. France must have great confidence in him," said Charlie, as the young Frenchman, decorated with a bonnet, commenced waltzing with one of his male companions. Charlie rose from the table and lighted a cigar, and as he and Tom strolled down the steps in the twilight, a buzz of admiration and an unsuppressed "Who's that" followed them as they went their way over the little bridge towards the Kursaal.

"Come, Mademoiselle Eugénie, you know well enough, you hypocrite."

"Parole d'honneur," said Eugénie, jumping up to have another peep.

"There, don't excite yourself, and I'll tell you. But he won't do for you: he cares for nothing but play. You'd be jealous of the ace of spades in a fortnight."

In the meantime Tom and his brother reached the Kursaal.

The walk in front of the rooms was crowded to excess: every chair and table was occupied. Some were drinking coffee, some wine; and the fragrant air, the balmy night breeze, was laden with the wreaths of—of—what shall I say?—bad tobacco. Long pipes, short pipes, and cigars, Pernambucos, Tordesillas, Cabanas, and all the growth of Lubeck, Bremen, and Hamburgh had nigh smothered the pretensions of the true Havannah. The huge globes of gas in front of the assembly rooms were blazing in full light, and under its portico, or leaning and sitting in every variety of posture, men and women discussed the all-important subject of to-morrow's racing. Every nation seemed to have contributed its quota to the whole. Russians, with highly-dressed and delicate-looking women laden with jewellery, strode straight towards the tables; Germans of all types—the Austrian, the Prussian, the proud and handsome Hungarian noble; the Pole, forgetful for a moment of the barbarity of his masters, con-

trasted favourably in intelligence and civilisation with his rulers; Paris sent her motley groups, and England hers. Here the highest type of Norman or Saxon aristocracy strode regardless of criticism or consequences of the questionable company in which it was playing its part. Vice, in its most attractive garb, from the purlieus of the Cité d'Antin and St. John's Wood, affected to have raised itself to a fictitious respectability by the level in which it found itself; and the virtuous and reputable were fain to come and air their consciences, *en route* for the thousand-and-one winter-quarters south and east of Baden, by an hour or two of laxity and dissipation; as if their respectability had been got up above the mark, in order to be brought down, by a good hearty gallop, into working condition. A starched petticoat, hung up in a damp atmosphere, sits all the better for the change.

In this large room, this vast salle, with its white and gold, and well-mirrored walls, and

smoothly-polished floor, were some half-dozen people. They consisted of a French roué of the first water, a wit, a bon-vivant, a gentleman, a duke, who had sacrificed health, talents, and position to popularity with the demi-monde. Clever men and good women wept over the shortcomings of De Rougemont. There he was, with a pleasant smile playing round his lips, which had just parted for the emission of a bon mot, which his companions were enjoying. They were a Paris banker, a secretary of legation, a ruined gambler, a Russian prince, and an ex-danseuse, who was just then trying her pas de fascination on the stone floor of the Northerner's heart. There is but little elasticity in marble, however highly polished.

The inner rooms, opening from the salle, were devoted to play. Everybody at Baden is supposed to play: almost everybody does so. Some with a nervous, anxious look, and an uncomfortable twitching of the fingers, and an expression of face which says nothing but "Gold, more

gold:" such men always back their ill-luck. Some with a cold, glazed look, which watches night after night the heap grow less, and feels the heart grow harder and harder: true, but unsuccessful, gamesters. Others, with a wild reckless impatience, betokening nothing more at present than a love of excitement, a bold, buccaneering sort of gambler, who loves to throw down his rouleau, and leave it on the colour. A few pettifoggers at florins and five-franc pieces; your respectable cit from Balham Hill, who counts the florins to his wife and daughters, which he has brought away the night before, and holds his tongue about the three Napoleons which have mysteriously disappeared on the previous occasion. The tables live by these men, and there are half a dozen who live, very badly, by the tables.

I think that, even in the matter of gambling, Charlie Thornhill exercised a sort of influence over his brother, and most men with whom he came in contact. His associates did not care to

be openly dissolute before him. Many were so, but they wished him away, and would rather have put it off to another time. Be that as it may, Tom did not play that night.

"Who's that, Tom?" said Charlie, as, at a later hour of the night, they leant over the low, iron balustrade that runs from pillar to pillar in front of the Kursaal. Charlie took his cigar from his mouth, and pointed to a handsome, dark man, large, tall, assured-looking, of middle age, dressed heavily but well, not in evening costume, closely shorn, even to the upper lip. He was distinguished-looking without being aristocratic.

That is the Comte Bernard de Nesle. He is the ostensible proprietor of the largest stud of race-horses in France; the largest better, and the best judge of pace in the Jockey Club. He has ruined himself at it, and is making fortunes for his employers: need I say for himself too. Having a large stud, he can almost always make the betting what he likes, and by starting three he can make the running tally with his book."

"Count," said Tom, "what are they laying about Desparado for the Continental St. Leger to-morrow."

The count looked up, shook the ashes of his cigar to the ground, saluted Tom as if he had not lost sight of him for ten minutes in his life, and answered, "Nothing: there's not a man here with a soul above a five-franc piece, or a heart half as large. I've got on 200*l.*, and if he wins, you'd think that Baden would be beggared. I went all round the rooms to collect that; and yet they can find comfort and consolation in those rascally tables. The zeros are enough to beat any man, κεραμευς κεραμει."

"Come, you shan't say that. I'll lay you 300*l.* more even against the horse; and if he does not win I'll give you a dinner and break the bank afterwards. My brother Charles, Comte Bernard de Nesle;" and the Frenchman acknowledged the compliment with finished grace, as though he only had come to Baden for this purpose; Charles, on his side, with distant polite-

ness. "Gauche!" said the Frenchman to himself.

"What a lovely woman!"

"Where!" exclaimed Charlie and De Nesle at the same time.

"There, standing under the lamp by the orchestra, with a crimson and gold opera cloak, talking to Sir David Mackinnon."

"She's an Englishwoman by birth," said the count, "and married, very young, a celebrated *littérateur*, who is now editor of the ——. He treated her shamefully; and there was some story in Paris current about her—I forget what. But here comes one of your compatriots who must know. Mr. Smith, 'Œdipus,' or 'Sphinx,' of your great sporting paper, 'The Cockfighter's Chronicle.' Smith knows everything and everybody. How are you, Smith?"

Tom Thornhill put out his hand, and Smith responded to the greeting. All racing men wanted the good services of "Sphinx" at one time or another. He carried a frightful knout,

which he exercised with discriminating zeal. He knew his friends from his enemies. Tom, De Nesle, and the Sphinx dived at once into sporting matters; and though the Sphinx knew no more of a horse than of a quagga, he knew the names and parentage of a great many. It answered his purpose quite as well. Charlie meanwhile was casting first into one waistcoat pocket and then into the other, to find *the paragraph*, which he had carefully abstracted from "The Cockfighter's Chronicle," with which to confront Smith. Luckily Charlie had dressed himself for dinner, or Smith might have been laid up for the races.

"Well, Sphinx, who's to win to-morrow?"

"If the Count de Nesle doesn't know, no one does." This was a left-handed compliment.

"You know Madame Dorval, the editor's wife, Smith?—oh, yes, of course you do. Let's have it. Ah, by Jove! he knows. Come, out with it, that's a good fellow."

"Well, it's a good story. You've heard it, of course, count? No? Oh! by Gad, I'm not

sure whether it's true or not; but I had it from first-class authority. Montmorency told me, and he was in the house. You know Dillon? Everybody knows him; he's as mad as a March hare: his grandmother, Lady Elizabeth Carden, was in a private madhouse for years; split the straitwaistcoat, and bolted with the second turnkey. However, that's nothing. Dillon was staying in Paris at the Duc de Montpelier's with a large party. Madame Dorval was there, and he fell in love with her. Every man was in attendance, every woman was jealous of her. The consequence was that terrible disclosures were made to Dillon, under the seal of secrecy, of Madame's reputation, particularly with the duke himself. Dillon couldn't ask any one, you know, for he was bound by solemn pledges of secrecy not to do so. Poor fellow! he's dead. He was desperately in love, and determined to ascertain one fact at least, and to clear her character for his own satisfaction. So one night, when everybody was supposed to be in bed and asleep, Dillon got

up, carried a quantity of straw which he had collected, with no end of rubbish and tar, and put it at the foot of the great staircase. The bedrooms were all round the corridor at the top of it, and easily seen. He first of all set light to the straw, and when it was at its fury he rang the alarm-bell for fire, having first placed himself in a convenient ambush for seeing. It was not long before there was a considerable bustle, peepings into the open, and scuffling of feet, and banging of doors, and a mighty rush towards the seat of the conflagration. Madame Dorval was the only woman who did not come out of the wrong room."

"Come, come, Smith, that won't do," said the count, who did not like these reflections on his countrywomen.

"Fact, 'pon my soul," said the Sphinx. "Dillon was so convinced of it that he took to his bed and died." And the Sphinx walked on.

"Tom, that's the fellow I came here to horsewhip. I couldn't do it with you here, but I intend to-morrow."

"Horsewhip Œdipus? oh! nonsense; that's absurd. Nobody ever whips Œdipus. He's an amusing beast, and always says what he likes. That's the freedom of the press. What's he been doing to you?"

Charlie explained the paragraph which was in his other waistcoat pocket, and his happy subject of conversation at Frankfort.

"Bless your soul, Charlie, is that all? That's nothing—nothing by Jove! He's said thousands of things of us all. We rather like it—pleasant excitement—abuse when it's bad enough. We'll have him to dinner some day, to see him eat and hear him talk."

At this juncture the Duc de Rougemont put his head over the rails, and said, "Mr. Thornhill, what do you call a gentleman-rider?"

"Gentleman-rider?" said Tom, "Gentleman-rider? Gad! that's not so easy a question to answer. He ought to have a clean shirt—one a day, at least; the least said about language the better, duke: lots of fellows use provincialisms

upon principle—credit of the county, you know. Tick with a London tailor almost necessary to qualify, I should say; ay, Charlie? and an affair, as they call it, if an Irishman. Grandfathers and grandmothers quite unnecessary. What do you want to know for?"

As Tom Thornhill generally spoke rapidly, and not loudly, much of this was lost on De Rougemont, although a pretty good Englishman; but he understood the general import of the answer to imply that a man might be of the *aucune famille*, and yet occupy that distinguished position.

"Because I want to object to one Mr. Williams. He has dirty hands and shirts, and gets drunk in the morning, and doesn't speak like a gentleman, and never associates with them. Yesterday he was playing at skittles with Bernard de Nesle's jockey, and smoking a short pipe in the harness-room with Sneezenkoff's coachman: altogether he keeps very bad company."

"Dirty hands and shirts," said Tom, solilo-

quising *sotto voce*, "that's bad: drunk in the morning—I'm afraid I've seen the duke drunk earlier in the morning than ever he saw Williams; and as to company—oh! my dear Monsieur de Rougemont——. No; it won't do, duke, he must ride: besides, I want him to ride for me in the steeple-chase. He's a capital man, and my brother's above the weight."

"Does he ride for money?" said the duke, who had a horse in for the Ladies' Purse, and didn't want to be cut out by an Englishman.

"Money?—oh! money. Well, I never asked him. I always put him on something good—say fifty or a hundred to nothing."

"You're wrong, Tom; those are the fellows that spoil steeple-chasing," said Charlie. "I'm not proud, but I see no fun in riding with half the legs and ragamuffins in England for company. The Frenchmen are right; though they'll find it difficult to keep so."

The sun was rising, and had already drunk in the morning mists which settled about the valley

of the Oos, when Charlie found himself dressed, with nothing to do. Since he had applied himself to business it was a novelty, and he seemed to have lost that facility for engaging zealously in nothing which is such a talent for a pure idler to possess. I am by no means so great an admirer of early rising as to believe every virtue to be embraced by it. I have known very excellent men undeniable sluggards; and, as with sharp, cold, and severe weather, I know hundreds who are always struggling and fighting against their inclination to lie late in bed. Now virtue is the habit of the mind accompanied by pleasurable feeling, and must not be based upon antagonism to its usual actions, any more than the accidental discharge of a gun which brings down one bird in the course of a day will entitle its holder to the reputation of a good shot. Neither is he the more courageous man, whatever sophists may say, who wanders about in a battle-field wishing himself anywhere but where he is, but he who, knowing the danger, really courts her for her own

sake, and feels a constitutional pleasure in doing so. When, therefore, I say that Charlie Thornhill was dressed on the following morning by seven o'clock, whilst his brother Tom was soundly sleeping, and would sleep till it was nearly time to dress for the course, I do not wish to record any remarkable virtue in the young man—rather a restlessness, which might arise from love, regret, despair, or any other passion which wages continual war with the god of sleep.

Being dressed, it was desirable to do something; and if breakfasting on trout, and smoking cigars, and looking at prospects, and drinking and eating in general, be anything, then Baden-Baden is quite a commercial city, for it goes on all day. Charlie knew this; and the difficulty was to do these things most satisfactorily. Besides which, if he had nothing to do he had plenty to think of, and that could be best compassed further back from the footlights of the world's drama than the Hôtel Stéphanie. The thing was now to consider where to go for the

trout and cigars in question. To the Alten Schloss, the old château that frowns like an aged seneschal keeping watch over the town, and rebuking it for its worldliness and frivolity. Ah! old friend; you've had your time, too, you know, with your gloomy caverns, your galleries, towers, and moats; you did your wickedness with your bloodshed, and rapine, and wrong. But your vices smacked of nobility and greatness of soul; they were bastard sisters of courage, and chivalry, and faith. And so you look down on your ward with eyes of affectionate but severe regret. But who shall say that beneath all its luxury, heedlessness, and impulse there is no chivalry, no fortitude, no faith to be found? Not I, for one.

Charlie lit a cigar, and turned towards the Alten Schloss.

For the first time in his life it occurred to him that he had wasted a great deal of his time. What had he done at Gresham's? what afterwards? Nothing. Then he thought of Tom:

what a clever fellow he was, and how much beyond him in most things. This had always been the received opinion while they were boys, and it must be true. "And yet," said he to himself, "I'm always fidgeting myself about Tom." The fact is that Charlie was really uneasy. Tom had been so reckless; and his late habits had taught him that a very few years will utterly cripple an estate like Thornhills, if set about vigorously. Excelsior! he got up higher, climbing on through the dark pines, and catching here and there a glimpse of a magnificent prospect. "If I could but save him! or it! or both!" He emerged from the dark pines at the base of the castle. There was that magnificent prospect stretching away into the far distance: fainter and fainter it became, until the silvery, serpent-like Rhine was lost in the distant hills; and the blue lines of the horizon mingled imperceptibly with the atmosphere, and lost all definite form. And so did Charles Thornhill's thoughts. For a time they reverted to his breakfast; delighted he was

with material food which was set before him, nor till he had well disposed of it, did he again wander. He was not given to idle musings. It was quite impossible, however, to shut out all castle-building; so he got on from his brother Tom and his extravagances to his mother and Mary Stanhope; and then to his uncle, his curious will, and the explanation to come from Roger Palmer; and then he thought of himself, and what he might have done had things turned out differently. Had his uncle's fortune come to him, as expected—had he got the few thousands from the Kildonald estate, which seemed even now not impossible—had he made a fortune, if not inherited one—had he gone or written to Edith, told her and her father his plans and hopes, as far as he could, and asked for time—had he, in fact, ascertained beyond all doubt how far he might calculate upon the forbearance of the girl that loved him. And did she really love him; and how many of her best years was he worth; and had she seen "The Cockfighter's

Chronicle," or not, or had her brother told her of the mysterious or damning paragraph in the article by "Œdipus;" ought he not to explain, or had he any right to enter upon the question? Certainly he had; and a straightforward policy, when practicable, was the best. And now, when should he see her again? They were gone abroad: report said to Italy; Lady Marston said, "she didn't know where;" so it must be months, and might be years, before he had the opportunity. But there was a post, and, much as he hated writing, he would write to-night. Confound it, if one of those Italian scoundrels, with their soft Southern voices, handsome eyes and silky beards, were to see her——. But that's absurd. "I know she'll never marry any one but an Englishman. Still, to make sure, I'll write to-night." As he came to this determination he turned from the broken old tracery of a window through which he had been watching the winding stream in the far distance, bending his train of thought much after its fashion, and right

in the low doorway opposite he saw Edith Dacre.

In such a position, and with his coincidence of mental perception at the moment, he may be forgiven for having expected something romantic to arise. Nothing could be less so. As if she had fully expected him to be there, she said, "How dare you smoke so in the presence of ladies, Mr. Thornhill."

"I only see one, the last I expected to see here," and he came and shook hands with her.

"Mamma is outside looking at the view, and papa is with her."

"And Alice?"

"Is not well enough to climb so far. You hardly seem to know the state of her health?" At the moment she looked less cordially at Charlie, as he thought.

"No, Edith, I did not. I heard she was unwell, but not seriously. She is in Baden?"

"On our way to Italy for the winter."

Mr. and Mrs. Dacre were soon found. Their

greeting was cordial. Mr. Dacre had seen Charlie's name among the late arrivals, so that the surprise was naturally one-sided. News from England occupied half an hour more among the ruins. Lady Marston and Sir Frederick's health, and Charlie's own pursuits, came in for a share of attention. Beyond the fact of his presence in Baden the Dacres did not allude to Tom. Charlie remarked the omission; and before long the party began to descend.

Is it very extraordinary that after a short time Edith and Charlie should have found themselves a little in the rear of Mr. and Mrs. Dacre? and that when Charlie proposed to show them a short cut through the wood which, he was sure, came out close by the Neuen Schloss, or new château, that Mr. and Mrs. Dacre, being older than their own children, as we know they were, should have preferred to continue along the road? or that Edith Dacre, at Charlie's request, should have allowed herself to be persuaded? Charlie's natural eye to country must have stood him in

good stead, for he could have known no more about the Baden woods than the road to Jerusalem. They trusted him, however; and Mr. and Mrs. Dacre waited at the Neuen Schloss until they, who took the shortest road, overtook them.

During that short walk those young people said much—much that it was well to know for both of them. At first their conversation was very monosyllabic, but it progressed towards an intelligible sentence or two towards the end. Edith found out that it was no ungenerous motive that had prompted Charlie's silence since his uncle's death; and Charles Thornhill made a clean breast of it by exposing the difficulties and uncertainties of his present position, and his fear to ask her to share with him a want of luxury so different from that of her own home.

"And so, sir, you thought I should have said 'yes' if you had asked me?"

"I've thought so a long time, Edith, and that was the greater reason for not speaking."

"And what made you speak now, Charlie?"

"Your appearance here. I was thinking of you all the morning. I could endure the uncertainty no longer; and at the moment I turned round and saw you, it was with a determination to write to-night; but I shall ask your father to-day."

"And he will say, 'Wait.' I know him so well."

"And love him so much, Edith; so I shall say 'wait,' too."

"No, Charlie, that's not necessary. But you must listen to papa, and—and—Charlie," said she, looking up at him, "I shall never doubt again. Alice has taught me never to mistrust you; but you know I—I—did—just—hear about the Milesian lady. And who *is* that Mr. Œdipus who tells such stories?"

"Œdipus? Oh! he is Mr. Sphynx; but I don't think I need horsewhip him now."

There were several pauses in the walk that morning. Both looked down, and then up, and

their eyes met, and Charlie's smile reflected the nnocent happiness of his darling. Now she could see no difficulties, and feared no hindrance. Charlie had spoken, and she dare tell the world that she was his affianced bride. Charlie saw difficulties and delay, but none that he did not promise himself to overcome.

"You are ambitious, Edith. I know you are."

"Very, of a vast possession."

"What is it? A house in Belgravia, an opera-box, a mail phaeton, or a park like Thornhills? What is to be the size of it?"

"Can't you guess?"

"No."

"What is your height and weight, Charlie?"

"Exactly?"

"Yes," I must know exactly to a fraction."

"Six feet and half an inch, and twelve stone," said Charlie?"

"Then now you know the exact extent of my ambition. Listen, sir, and don't be conceited." Edith tried to smile, but a bright tear or two ran

over the lid as she said, "You once saved my life, Charlie, and now you have made all its happiness." She put up her face as she spoke, and when she took it down again there was a great deal of colour in it.

They ran down the next few steps to the Neuen Schloss, and found that the elderly folks, who had been round by the road, had only waited twenty-three minutes.

"I thought you didn't know your way, Thornhill, so well as you fancied. You seemed rather puzzled when you started."

Within one week from that time things had changed. Dacre had given a conditional consent to the engagement between Charles Thornhill and Edith. The first day's racing at Baden had taken place. Tom Thornhill had broken the bank, and was the talk of all Baden. He had also been finally rejected by Mr. Dacre; and Alice silently acquiesced in a decision which she knew to be right, and felt to be unmerciful. She was fighting bravely against a malady which the

south of Italy could not cure. Cold had nothing to do with it; and the bank had not suffered alone; for Tom Thornhill had half broken the truest heart that ever beat for man. The Dacres, however, were now gone to Italy. Charlie had been recalled from Frankfort, as soon as his furlough was up, to go to Chalkstone and Co. Mr. Bradhall had matured his plans by the arrival of an important witness. And Baden was impatiently awaiting the principal day's racing and steeple-chasing on the morrow. Mr. Williams had ridden in company with M. de Rougemont, on the plea of membership of a certain club in England, more sporting than particular; and the Baron de Finance names a horse called Glacier to be ridden by an Englishman whose name does not appear in the bill.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RACE AND ITS RESULTS.

"Continuo sontes ultrix accincta flagello
Tisiphone quatit insultans."—VIRG. *Æn.* vi.

A GLAZIER is not more unlike a glacier than the road to the Derby is unlike the road to Iffetzeim, the race-course of the duchy of Baden. Rolling along a flat but interesting valley, with the beautiful chain of the Black Forest in the distance, and which, with the woody heights above and around the town, relieve it of all monotony, are carriages of every description. The Russian drosky, the American dog-cart, the Prussian or Paris Berlin, and Hungarian ausspanner—every sort of hired vehicle, from the four-horsed barouche, with its yellow jackets,

long whips, big boots, and post-horses of official stamp, to the most humble coupé, were all there. There was the eil wagen, and an English-built four-in-hand, with the most elaborate harness, made to look as little like a coach as possible. I am no great admirer of the majority of the modern school of coachmen, but defend me from my friend Sneezenkoff, who officiated. There were the handsome carriages of the royal party, and here and there a Baden hack or two, carrying a Heidelberg student, and a young woman evidently out for the day. If the equipages were bad, the bonnets and toilettes were charming; and the women made up in drapery what the conveyances wanted in paint.

When a mob is not enthusiastic, a mighty crowd may get along a road without danger, especially before luncheon. Where a race is concerned an Englishman is enthusiastic, a Badener, a Pole, a Prussian, or an Austrian is not. The humour of an upset, connected with horses, does not strike them; and they would

rather be last on, or last off, the course than be run into by a drunken post-boy. They begin to like racing very much, but they are blind to the humours of the road down.

The consequence of this was a safe arrival at the Grand Stand, which presented an appearance of festivity quite incompatible with book-making or jobbing of any kind. Trellis work, creeping shrubs, bands of music, pretty women, and men of pleasure replaced the noisy and perspiring crowd yclept "the ring."

"What are you doing, Morland?" said Tom Thornhill to the only betting-man on the ground.

"Nothing at all, sir; there's no market, and not a hundred pounds in the whole of the Grand Stand."

The course stretched away on a fine, open, common-like piece of ground, surrounded on three sides by forest-trees and sloping sides of hills, dotted with villages and castles. It was admirably marked out with white posts and rails nearly all the way round. The enclosure for the

horses joined the stand, and in the centre was a covered platform which commanded a view of the whole course and country for miles. The immediate neighbourhood was a flat, open country; here and there an enormous dyke, but utterly fenceless. It was very heavy, and there was much standing crops of wheat, maize, potatoes, and patches of vegetation and vegetables, such as pertain to poor allotments in our own country. The Thornhills had ridden, and Daly and Tom's groom had already secured a stable for their horses. The former, however, was still on Kosciusko, who was too fresh to be trusted in a crowded stable, and since his subjugation, was too valuable.

"Who's that cantering down the course, Tom?" said Charlie, as a tall, thin man went down alone on a chestnut horse, officially.

"Finest horseman of his day, Charlie. That's Duncan Græme. Went well at Melton, and in Lord Fife's country. Lives in Paris now. Swears he rides better than ever, and the *manége* did it

for him. Of course that's humbug. He's gone down to start them."

Just then a remarkably quiet man, but considerably altered from the Mr. Bradhall whom we have seen, by the addition of a drooping moustache, and a small order of merit in the button-hole of his frock-coat, looked at Charlie. He was still unlike himself, but exceedingly like everybody else. Charlie whispered a few words to him.

"It's the next race, I think, Mr. Thornhill."

"It is."

"He's here, sir. I've seen him dressed and weighed in. It's all right. Be at hand, and have Daly here."

"I will. There he is on my bay horse. You know him well?"

"I do, sir. Burke won't ride to-day, so we shall save him from a fresh robbery. Be here"—here he looked at his watch—"in a quarter of an hour, and don't let us be seen together before that time. He'll be out of the weighing-room soon."

True enough Burke had arrived ten minutes before to ride The Glacier, by Young Snowdon, and was even now dressing under lock and key. He had a quick eye for a Continental bailiff and a Rechtshandel. He has already seen one on the road.

The previous race was over, and the Duc de Rougemont had already received the congratulations of his friends, in some cases a little uproarious, considering the delicacy of their toilettes. The bell had rung for saddling, and two of the steeple-chase horses were mounted and were being slowly paraded before the stand. At that moment a rush was apparent in the middle of the space allotted for weighing and mounting. A horse emerged from the crowd, which made way right and left, ridden by a powerful-looking man in orange and purple belt, and went straight at the white railings which separates that spot from the course. The rails are about five feet high, but Glacier had jumped them with apparent ease, and turning round to

the left was in a moment across the Iffetzheim road away for the Forest.

"He's away, sir," said Bradhall. "That fellow of mine has frightened him. There are so many writs out, he doesn't suspect the true cause. He's half broken his wrist, too, with the butt of his whip. We must to horse and back to Baden. I know his haunt now. There's a hundred pounds reward out by this time. They're very slow with us in their justice, but they're very sure."

Long before Bradhall had finished his speech another horse was seen to leave the crowd; this time a gentleman's groom was the rider; and a burst of applause followed as he rushed Kosciusko at the rails, and landed safely on the other side. "Too fast for timber," said Charlie, who could not help admiring the performance, stunned as he was by the unexpected escape of Burke. Daly turned in his saddle. "A hundred pounds," shouted Bradhall, "and a free pardon;" but Daly was already out of hearing. The crowd

watched the race from the platform till, imagining it to be a runaway gambler who was only leaving his creditors behind him, they turned their attention to the steeple-chase in hand, which could be no longer delayed for such a common occurrence as the escape of a defaulter.

"That arrives always in England," said the Baron de Champ Mars, turning to look at Mr. Rowlands on Medora and Mr. Burton on Bridegroom, who just then presented themselves.

About a hundred persons, however, swayed by interest or curiosity, ran to find their horses, amongst whom were Charlie, Mr. Bradhall, and his assistant. They were soon on the line, spread at a hopeless distance over the country; and Charlie most prudently followed the detective's advice; "The road, and to Baden. Keep him in view if possible." The foot of the hills was about eight miles distant, and for these Burke made, of course at his best pace. He had every advantage but one—weight. Glacier was in tip-top condition; Kosciusko was not fit to race. He

had about a hundred yards' start; but he was riding thirteen stone (this was a Continental steeple-chase be it remembered), Daly about eleven. He had also to judge the pace; for he could allow himself neither to be run up to nor to ride out "The Glacier" to a standstill. Onward they went, Burke preserving the line, and not an apparent fence to stop them between the road and the Forest. Daly continued to gain, but it was clear that he was pressing his horse; and as the country was deep it must soon begin to tell. Burke, too, was evidently fearful of letting him come near; and so they rode through standing patches of corn, maize, and potatoes, at one time the distance lessening between them, at another increasing. It was clearly Daly's game to get on, especially as he could not hope to hold out against the condition of the other; and thus they sped onward, watched with an intensity of interest by three or four of their followers not known to the others, who soon began to fall off. Tom, who had followed his brother, came up.

"What's the matter, Charlie? Who the —— is the fellow?" And here he named a person whom I think quite as black as he is painted. Charlie scarcely heard, as he continued at a moderate gallop along the side of the road. "Is that horse thorough-bred that that groom of yours is riding."

"Yes; by an English horse out of an Arab mare. He was bred in Hungary."

"That's lucky. By Jove he's gaining. No," said Tom, who was enjoying the race more as a matter of speculation than anything else—"no. I'll back the steeple-chaser for a hundred. But who is he, Charlie?"

Dissimulation is a mask which suffocates, but Mr. Bradhall occasionally let in the air through some breathing-holes, and he did so on this occasion. "There's a warrant out against him for forgery, to the tune of several thousand pounds, and there are suspicions of his being concerned in the murder of the late Mr. Thornhill, many years ago, which you'll not recollect, maybe. It

made a great stir at the time." They had been going for about seventeen minutes, and Tom sat down silently on his horse, and urged him to increased speed. At about this point, a road ran at right angles, or nearly so, to the one they were traversing, so that at the distance of a quarter of a mile it must be crossed by Burke and his pursuer. We have said that the country is here quite undivided by fences; but parallel to this road runs a dyke of enormous depth, half full of water, and banked up on both sides, perpendicularly, with rough-hewn stones. The width from side to side may be eighteen feet, and when the depth of the ground be considered, and the bad taken off, it is a most formidable jump for any horse. "Here's an end of it," said Charlie, "turn to the right; if Burke gets over, it's a certian fall for Kosciusko—most likely for both of them. They're nearly done now." On they came, and the band of pursuers were just within distance to see Burke urge his horse still faster as he came to the obstacle, confident in his horse-

manship, and in the staying qualities of "The Glacier," who, to tell the truth, had plenty left in him yet. Kosciusko was but thirty or forty yards behind him, and Daly's own life, in a measure, depended on the capture of Burke. The danger of a fall was not even weighed in the balance. Burke's horse rose at the leap, but as he did so, his hind legs seemed to fail him, and he fell with his chest against the bank, throwing his rider into the road, and rolling back to the bottom of the water, where he was hopelessly struggling amongst weeds and mud. Had Daly taken time to see this, the capture of Burke was a certainty; but he did not until too late, and, unable to hold his horse, he, too, came at the place. The horse, strange to say, cleared the dyke, but over-jumped himself, and fell with a crash on the other side on to poor Daly, who lay bruised and mangled without sense or motion. Not so Kosciusko, who rose at the instant, not much the worse for his fall; and when Charlie Thornhill reached the spot, he found the servant

insensible, and Burke continuing his flight on his (Charlie's) horse.

To save a life is a higher duty than to take one, and the delay that naturally occurred in attention to Daly caused more loss of time. When the chase was resumed by Charlie and his brother, with Mr. Bradhall, it was clear that it was a hopeless case; and after riding two miles further in pursuit, they returned to Baden, happy in the assurance of the police that his escape was impossible. Charlie never cursed the goodness of his horses till that day; but as Kosciusko disappeared beneath Burke's weight, leaving the hacks hopelessly struggling after him, he sincerely wished he had been the sorriest brute in Germany. Daly was taken on to Baden, still insensible, apparently dying though not yet dead. Burke entered the Forest with an idea that he had outwitted a bailiff's man, and only wondering how such a fellow came by so good a horse, which rivalled the best of his own Irish career. About

fifteen years of immunity from punishment make a man wonderfully sanguine, not to say forgetful of his dues.

It was days before any gleam of intelligence lighted up the features of the wounded man. Internal injury, and the severe shock to the system, which resulted from a pressure on the spine, received in his fall, forbade any hope of permanent amendment. Strange decrees of Providence! here in an effort to make reparation for the great crime of his life, Daly met with his punishment, and his accomplice was the unwitting instrument of its infliction. Naturally, the common idea connected with retribution is proximity to the offence. Chastisement is regarded by most men as a sequence or consequence of crime. It is so; but not an immediate one. Daly's present pain and possible loss of life arose entirely from the circumstances of his original connection with Burke, and, as we shall see, by his own dishonest and vagabond existence. It turned out, indeed, that the magnitude of the

guilt in which he had unintentionally involved himself acted afterwards as a check upon him; and some natural feelings common to many, and not the least so to his countrymen (feelings of a heavy debt or obligation, which he was willing to pay in his own coin by instalments, and as occasion offered, without inconvenience to himself), kept him from pursuing the path on which he had entered. If any one had suggested to him that hanging by public execution, or penal servitude for life, was the proper recompense, it would have shocked his sense of independent action. When first an opportunity presented itself of helping one of the name of Thornhill, his argument was quite a natural one, and was strong enough to enlist his friend Gipsy George, the illegitimate son of Kildonald, in his favour. "Faix, it's lucky we wasn't found out, or we'd be at some Bothany Bay or Portland Island, or some o' them far-off places now, and maybe Misther Thornhill 'ud never have had his dog again. What good 'ull we be to him if we was just hanged or thran-

sported?" and thus he philosophically acquiesced in the decrees of Providence. When his reason returned, however, like more literate and wiser persons, he began to wonder why he should be punished just as he was engaged in the last act for the establishment of truth, and at the very time he had made up his mind to make a clean breast of it, come what might. It did not occur to him that, although he had been paying his debts in his own way, at his own leisure, and very much to his own satisfaction, the mortgage was liable to be called in at once. But so it is, and so it was with him; and as he had grown to think himself rather generous in his resolutions of amendment, he was taken aback by the compulsory demand which just retribution had made upon him. If his mode of reasoning for years had been eccentric, and his method of acting up to his convictions peculiar, it must be remembered that he was an Irishman: a recollection which covers a multitude of peculiarities, and which may account rationally for his having

almost regarded himself at last as the tutelary deity of the house of Thornhill.

Meanwhile, Kosciusko had returned to his stable, and, what is more to the purpose, Burke had been taken. In a lonely house, not far from one of the wildest spots in that part of the Black Forest, he was found on the night of his escape. The place is more the natural formation of a rock in a dark precipice overhanging the valley of the Mourg, not many miles from Eberstein. It had long been the resort of evil-doers, and was held by the remnant of a gang of coiners when Burke sought shelter amongst them. His foreign manners and language were displeasing to them; the violence of his temper, assumption of superiority, and open daring, so different from their own low cunning and desire of concealment, that, like the hunted deer, they left him to his fate. On his return to the place he found no one; and it is believed that the reward offered for his capture tempted one of the gang to betray him.

Burke was physically a bold man. When the

Gerichts-diener or Process-server appeared at the door of his temporary quarters, he speculated upon how far resistance might serve him. Foreign prisons are proverbially unpleasant. "How much for?" said he, folding his arms coolly, in a rough coat which he had assumed over his jockey dress; "what's the money?"

"It's not money, Herr Englander." Here Burke drew a pistol; the German functionary drew back, and Burke advanced. At the same moment, our old acquaintance, as we first saw him, Mr. Bradhall, and his aide-de-camp, presented themselves.

"No, sir: it's a case of forgery and murder of Geoffrey Thornhill, Esq., late of Thornhills, in the county of ——." Burke's hand dropped, and his whole appearance at once underwent a change. Mr. Bradhall improved the opportunity to secure him.

"Forgery? murder?" said, or rather stammered he. "You'll be troubled, I'm thinking, to find evidence of such a charge."

"Phelim O'Brian," said Bradhall to that worthy, who appeared in the doorway; "is that our prisoner?"

"No other," said he; "faix, Misther Burke, it's thrue; and the papers, wid the names an' all, Kildonald and Thornhill, and the title deeds, is all in the hands o' the lawyers, bad luck to them."

"And you have done this, Phelim O'Brian: you, that I brought up ever since you was a child; who ate, and drank, and was clothed by me; who'd have wanted bread but for the man you've thravell'd hundreds of miles to destroy. Why have ye done this thing, Phelim?"

"And tell me, Mr. Burke, where is Mary Connor? Could no other serve your dainty taste, but the girl that I loved and that loved me, and that would have made a home for me when I was old, and worn, and broken; that would have shared my lot; ay, that would have changed it?—who would have made the bitter sweet and hard usage soft; and taught me to bless you and all the world, instead of to curse them?"

"You fool!" said Burke, with the rage of a chained tiger; "you fool; Mary Connor! it was Kildonald, not I; and her children are alive to thank you for money you have taken from them to put into the pockets of Thornhill. Those papers which were stolen by you or your accomplices, those are the receipts of the purchase money from Geoffrey Thornhill."

It was true enough; the purchase money had been received by Burke, and he had afterwards become possessed of the receipts he had himself given. From that period he had treated the estate as his own. And having been employed by both sides to expedite matters, he had used both for his own purpose. Kildonald had been fain to accept certain sums of money, as the price of his property, which by forgery at his death had been made to appear more. The appropriated rents of the Kildonald estate during the brief span of Thornhill's life had never found their way further than the coffers of Burke.

It was necessary at last to take Daly's depo-

sitions on oath. It became apparent to all that he could not survive the internal injuries he had received. The necessary authorities were therefore brought together, and the substance of what may be called his confession was as follows.

On the day of Bidborough Races, 18—, memorable by the death of Geoffrey Thornhill, Daly, *alias* Heenan, *alias* Donovan, had been induced by Burke, to whom he was under pecuniary obligations, and in whose power he was by various undiscovered misdemeanors, to assist in robbing Kildonald on his way home. Having ascertained where he would dine and where he would sleep, which was not difficult by his friend Burke after his quarrel with Thornhill, the scheme was concocted. George, known in the country as Gipsy George, or the Handsome Gipsy, was a son of Kildonald by a woman called Mary Connor. The indignities and cruelty with which he and his mother had been treated made him a willing assistant in the design, and there can be no doubt he intended to have killed his

reputed father, had he fallen in with him. Patiently waiting, therefore, under the dark firs, on the heath where I have stated the murder to have taken place, they at length heard the sound of a horse's feet. They hastily threw across the road a strong rope. The descent between the dark box and firs, where we last parted with Geoffrey Thornhill, was exceedingly steep: he was riding with the reins on his horse's neck, and in a moment he was down. Daly and George rushed forward, and a blow from the latter stretched him upon the ground. It was no sooner struck, however, than the men discovered their mistake, and would at once have made their escape. Two things prevented this consummation—the sudden revival of Thornhill, who was only stunned, and the appearance of Burke himself upon the field of action. Thornhill had seized Daly, while George stood aloof, uncertain how to act; and the struggles of Daly were quite in vain to extricate himself from so powerful a man. Fearful of losing his prey, masked and dressed

so as to defy detection, as he thought, and still imagining that it was Kildonald whom he saw struggling, Burke rushed to the rescue. Seeing a fresh assailant, Thornhill loosed his hold of the passive, and closed with the active opponent. The struggle was severe—both powerful men and in the prime of life—but the violent blow, and the blood which trickled from the wounded temple began to tell, and Burke's vigorous efforts were gradually gaining the mastery. At that moment the moon shone out, and the mask was torn rudely from his face.

"Burke!" said Thornhill, "good God! is it possible? Now I know you." The words were his last; the eyes of Burke met the gleam of George's pistol barrel as it lay on the ground, and, seizing it, he shot the unfortunate man through the head. "Och! will I ever forget it, though it took less time to do than to tell it!" sobbed Daly.

"And what's become of Gipsy George, as you call him?"

"Wasn't he killed by Mr. Thornhill's horse the night when he went to hand the prisoners over to the police, yer honour. Them's his papers in the little box I carries about wid me."

Such was the sum and substance of the deposition of Michael Daly. The papers found in the box were, besides, perfectly confirmatory of those which were already in the hands of Sir Frederick Marston and his lawyer, and established, beyond all doubt, the right of the Thornhills to the Kildonald estate, with no end of arrears of rent, which it was quite impossible to get. Within a week Daly was no more.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE BROTHERS FARED APART.

"Intervalla vides humanè commoda."—Hor. *Sat.*

Reader. Will you do me the favour to explain one or two inconsistencies?

Author. I dislike explanations; but we have travelled so far on such good terms that I'll do my best.

Reader. Why in the world didn't Daly tell all this before? It would have been easy to have done so.

Author. Undoubtedly it would; but it is not my business to penetrate motives, especially those of an Irishman: merely to state facts. I think Daly acted in the most natural manner possible. It takes a man a long time to acknowledge his passive participation in a murder: besides, when

the first brush is over, and the pursuit less keen, there is more time for reflection.

Reader. Then why did he confess at all?

Author. Because, while time and circumstances took him further from fear of punishment, they brought him nearer to fear of God. Teach a man that he is not utterly worthless, and you make him better. Show him that he has sympathies with his fellow-creatures, and you bring him in closer alliance with his Maker. Society had been kinder to him of late, and he felt an obligation to society. Besides, all men have some natural feelings, which require only the proper chord to be touched to respond. Charlie Thornhill's kindness of manner and honesty of purpose had done this. Had he been other than he was, Daly might long have felt the obligation without much inclination to act up to its demands. There was another reason, not so good a one, but still powerful—his dislike to Burke, who was selfish, and had pressed his point unmitigatedly, where Daly now saw that his own ignorance had been imposed upon.

Burke had always persisted in an equal participation in the murder by George and Daly; and they had feared, with reason, that the punishment would have been the same. Time, as I have said, shook this belief, and produced its fruits in a confession.

Reader. And now of course you mean to give us a trial, and bring us suborned witnesses, and enter into legal subtleties, and all that sort of thing; because that's the most interesting part: the women like it best.

Author. Naturally; because they understand it least. It's just that law that I dread most. Good law must be paid for, it's very expensive. Bad law, which I could easily get from my acquaintances who are fond of pool and grilled bones on circuit, is open to criticism; and though I am well able to bear a buffeting on my own account, I don't like it for other people's mistakes. I may therefore tell you at once that Burke was taken to prison, and on the morning that he was to have been tried he was found

hanged in his cell, having accomplished that end with considerable ingenuity by means of the sheets of his bed. He would scarcely have been convicted of the murder, though he would have ended his life in penal servitude for his forgeries, which were easy of proof. The betting-book, which was returned to Sir Frederick Marston by coach, had come from Burke, and was given by him to Daly's brother, known to us as Donovan, who died at Marston after some very incoherent disclosures. The lovers of a sensation regarded the suicide of Burke as a severe national disappointment. The friends of the Thornhills and the family themselves regarded it, after all Charlie's efforts to discover the murderer, as a merciful dispensation of Providence.

Within one month of the events detailed in our last chapter Charles Thornhill was summoned from Frankfort to take his place in the house of Messrs. Mint, Chalkstone, Palmer, and Co., of East Goldbury, City, London. He came, was kindly received by Roger Palmer and his part-

ners, and installed in a small corner railed and curtained off for the privacy of foreign correspondents especially. He found Roger Palmer unaltered; and he did his utmost by dining in—Harley Street, let us say—to cheer the solitude of his benefactor. It was not long before he succeeded so far that the old man was never happy without him. "I don't ask you, Thornhill, to give up your chambers to come and live with me: it might be irksome to you; it would be to any young man of your connections and habits; but if ever you have an hour to spend, or if ever you want a change, remember your father's old friend in Harley Street."

"You've taken care that I shall not forget you, sir; and if you are alone, and it gives you pleasure, I shall be very happy to come to-day."

It was a very curious thing to see the friendship or attachment between these two men.

The one was small, shrivelled, nervous, with closely-compressed lips and delicate features, afraid of cold or wind, timid, distrustful, penu-

rious, and wealthy. The other tall, active, handsome, with an air of fashion and independence which sat nobly on him; homely, honest, indifferent to money except for what it purchased, despising luxury for himself, but always enjoying it as belonging to his order when it came in his way; fearing nothing, hoping everything, and living on his labour from hand to mouth. As they walked into Oxford Street, or along Bond Street, together, they were an extraordinary couple; and still more so as they went to East Goldbury in a cab, huddled side by side, his share of which Charlie most scrupulously paid. The fact is, they were of use to one another, and they felt it; and men usually love what they imagine they can protect.

When Charlie went to London the Dacres had resumed their journey to Italy. No change for the better appeared in Alice Dacre, and it was desirable that she should have different air from her own. Need I say that Mr. Dacre could not withhold his consent to Edith's engagement

with Charlie, though the consent was saddled with some conditions as regards time. What cared they for time? So Edith went to nurse her sister, with a heavy heart, from the Black Forest; and Charlie went to visit his brother Tom.

"I hear you were lucky again last night, Tom," said Charlie, as he took up a cigar, and lighted it. He seemed in unusually good spirits, which was not common with him. He was the most equable man alive, was Charlie Thornhill.

"I was, Charlie. Those fools outside (don't you see 'em?), de Rougemont, and Carlingford, and half a dozen more, would give anything for my luck, and I'm so miserable that—that—d—— it, Charlie; I beg your pardon, old fellow, but I can't help it." Tom was fairly choking.

"Give up play, Tom," said Charlie, bluntly; "it don't agree with you."

"I wish I could. I could give up the money, but I can't give up the play." Tom took a turn up the room, and poured out a glass of sherry.

"Leave this place, Tom; it's depressing and enervating to a degree."

"Such a life as mine, worthless, useless, with all I feel in me that might have been better, would be so anywhere."

"Don't speak so, Tom; but give it up. Leave this place, at all events. Go to England. Anything but this Continental life. I'm going to England next week. Get half a dozen horses, and go down to Thornhills."

"Ah! Charlie, you don't know what it is. I can't live at Thornhills. I can't keep half a dozen horses—at least, I can't ride them. There is but one thing that keeps me from thinking of—of—her, and that's play."

Charlie's eyes opened to their fullest extent: in his modesty he could have feared for himself, but what woman could have been cruel to Tom? The thing seemed impossible. Yet who was the "she" that had evidently turned her back upon the finest fellow in the world? He allowed himself to run over these facts in a few moments, and then

he walked straight up to Tom. He was the taller of the two, not the handsomer; but it would have been difficult to find two more perfect specimens of the high-bred Englishman in their peculiar style. Putting his arm affectionately over Tom's shoulder, and looking cheerfully at him, he said, "If it's only a woman, cheer up, Tom. Look at me; Edith Dacre has accepted me. I'm engaged to be married to her. I came to tell you this before I go to Frankfort."

Tom Thornhill took his brother's hand. "Thank God for that bit of good news! How selfish I must have been never to have seen it."

"Tom," said Charlie, suddenly brightening, "go and marry Alice Dacre; she's the best and handsomest girl I ever saw, except, except—you know."

Tom's face grew paler; he bit his nether lip; and then with an effort he said, "She is the woman, Charlie, the woman who has twice refused me. I thought it was her mother, or her father, but this time there was no mistake. But

it's over; and at the end of the week I shall go God knows where; it don't much matter. I hear they winter in Florence; so that I shall go to Spain or the south of France." The conversation continued on other matters; and when they parted the next day, it was years before they met again.

Charlie's life was now monotonous enough. The Dacres were in Florence. The accounts of Alice's failing health came constantly to Charlie in regular letters from Edith. Sir Frederick and Lady Marston were in town, and as the spring advanced, many of his old acquaintances reappeared. None appeared more pleased with Charlie Thornhill's improved prospects than Lady Montagu Mastodon. "Not such a fool, after all," said her ladyship. "As to his brother, I believe, if there were many such spendthrifts, the Jews would be eventually ruined, and driven to honest employment by sheer force of poverty."

The summer advanced. Alice Dacre could

now be moved: they were going out of Florence: but the letters spoke of no improvement. In the autumn Charlie went down to his mother. Tom's difficulties were serious; he himself was gone to the East; an occasional letter to his mother spoke only of his excursions here and there; it never touched the subject which Charlie knew to be nearest his brother's heart; and he himself was religiously silent. He, too, heard from his brother, but it was entirely business, and of a painful nature. Must Thornhills be sold? that was the question. "Apparently," said Mr. Mason, the family solicitor, "it must; but it could be held on another year, and an eligible tenant perhaps found." Poor Mrs. Thornhill and Mary Stanhope! what a change. Of course they must have moved if Tom had brought a wife; but how differently. "Oh! what a blessing he might have been to us, Mary, had he but married well!"

"You don't seem to think of his wife, Emily. She might have been in our place now. We're

like the cats. It's only a change of locality for us. I suppose we shall find mice everywhere."

The reader must excuse our shifting our ground occasionally. We hope he may find mice everywhere.

Tom Thornhill was lounging on the walls at Malta one lovely evening in the waning autumn, just twelve months after our last meeting with him. Since that time he had been wandering from capital to capital, wherever excitement, above all, the excitement of play, was to be met with. He watched the dark blue sea as he smoked his cigar, and his thoughts wandered back to long years gone by. In many cases this is an enervating process. It is so when the prospect in front presents enterprise and difficulty, but it is the reverse when all before us is a land barren of good, and stretching hopelessly on in the luxury and indolence of an Eastern landscape. Then, to look back, and see how hopeless and aimless has been our career is

more honest, more hopeful than to close our eyes to it.

In Tom's case it was better that he should look back. He had forgotten the true end of existence, Duty, in looking forward only to the false end, Pleasure. He saw a picture, as he turned his face from the sinking sun of his prosperity to the coming darkness of adversity. He saw his home afar off, and its manifold obligations. He saw his mother, in advancing age, yearning for her elder and best-loved son. He saw his brother, successfully struggling with adversity, and making for himself the place that he had taken by right. He saw a loved and loving girl, wearied and brokenhearted, who had refused to link her fate and her family with a spendthrift and a gambler. He knew she loved him. He knew the offers she had cast aside, with one hope to cling to. And he now knew how he loved her. He felt the unsatisfied craving of a heart by nature noble, generous, true, but which had been turned from its course

by selfish infirmities and unwholesome vanities. Was it too late? Three times? And what were his hopes? Only in utter self-reprobation; in consistent change. But there needs proof of it. Time. Months, or years perhaps. She shall have it; the latter, if need be, and a life of devotion afterwards.

At that moment, on the other side of an angle of the wall against which he was leaning he heard voices. They were some officers, smoking and enjoying the still night, like himself.

"Beautiful: I never saw such a beautiful girl. Dacre was very fond of her." Tom's ears opened at the name. "When did she die?" Naturally Tom felt a little interest in the lady who had captivated a Dacre.

"On the eighteenth, I think. I saw it in 'Galignani' on the mess-table this afternoon. Do you recollect her, Dixon?"

"Of course I do. Her father was very civil to us. Poor girl! What lovely hair she had!"

Tom listened still. His heart beat at the mention of the peculiarity. "What did it say in the paper; anything about her?"

"No, not a word. Merely, on the eighteenth, Alice something Dacre; I forget what the second name was. I'm very sorry for Teddy: his favourite sister."

Tom heard no more, or the voices ceased. His head fell between his hands on the parapet of the wall, by which he was standing, and every sensation but one of dull and heavy pain left him. For upwards of an hour he remained in this state. He returned to his hotel.

"Waiter, find me the 'Galignani.'" True enough, it was there. "On the 18th of May, Alice Carrington Dacre——." He read no more: the paper dropped from his hand, and he sought his room, blinded with tears.

In the meantime Charlie continued to prosper. Everything that was in his hand turned out well. Roger Palmer liked Charlie for himself, so did his partners, but they liked prosperity also. His

regular business-like habits were very useful as an example to the house. He was at the bank first, he left it last. Neither was he without his pleasures in the midst of business. He kept his one modest hack, though his income was now become a good one for a single man. He had plenty of society at the West End of town. Lady Marston would have given him a home, but his mother was in town for a time, and she had a prior claim. How the two women sorrowed over Tom, to Charlie's intense delight! How they loved him! "Why doesn't he write oftener?" said his mother. "And when he does write, why doesn't he say more about himself?" Charlie had his surmises, but he kept them to himself. They sat comfortably at breakfast in Grosvenor Place.

"When are the Dacres coming home, Charlie?"

"At the beginning of next season," said he.

"And then we shall lose you, I suppose?" re-

joined Mrs. Thornhill, with a little, a very little petulance.

"Never, my dear mother, if you mean by my marriage. Perhaps it won't be so soon; and whenever it is, you'll gain Edith, and lose nothing."

Mrs. Thornhill did not seem convinced. "Where are you going to-morrow?"

"To Harley Street. Roger Palmer has been ill: not exactly ill, but unwell: and I promised to go to dinner to-morrow. To-morrow's Sunday; so I shall dine with him, my dear mother, if you and Aunt Mary have no objection."

Aunt Mary certainly had none; so he went to the stables, which were behind the house, and mounting his hack, rode quietly to the City.

There was a comfortable room kept for Charlie to dress in at Roger Palmer's, and about half-past six on this said Sunday Charles Thornhill completed his toilet to his own satisfaction.

The dinner to which they sat down was as simple as it possibly could be; well cooked and well put upon the table, but of the most ordinary kind. One thing was remarkable in a man of Mr. Palmer's habits of economy,—the excellence of the wines: still these were of the ordinary sorts at all times. Indeed, he entertained rarely and sparingly; for Roger Palmer was cynical as well as parsimonious.

"You like that port wine, my dear Thornhill?" said the old man, drawing up his chair to the side of the table, and sitting with his back to the light.

"Very much indeed," replied Charlie. "I never have drunk any so good."

"No! port wine cannot be bought, nor made: it can only be kept. That wine's worth, let me see—yes—two guineas a bottle: if it were in the market."

"Have you much of it?" said Charlie.

"Yes; plenty. But why do you ask?"

"I beg your pardon, really—but——. Well,

sir, you never drink it yourself; why not put it in the market?"

"Perhaps my heir might like it, Master Charles." The old man's eyes twinkled, and his ordinary mode of address was exchanged for something more familiar. He helped himself to some old Madeira, and pushed the bottle of port over to Charlie. The people were coming out from evening service as he did so.

"Do you know what happened yesterday afternoon in Pall Mall?"

"Nothing remarkable, that I'm aware of."

"It is thought very remarkable: at least it will be sufficiently startling to some people tomorrow morning. Your uncle's partner, George Hammerton, died suddenly yesterday evening."

"Suddenly!" repeated Charlie after him, as a host of recollections came at once to his mind. "Was it suddenly? What age was he?"

"Quite suddenly—not very old; about sixty-seven or eight. Do you know how far you are interested in this event?"

"To a certain extent, I do know: but you and Sir Frederick Marston are the persons to whom I am directed by my Uncle Henry's last instructions to apply, as capable of giving me an explanation."

"Marston is not precisely a man of business; and if you like, I believe I can place the matter very clearly before you." The old man looked thoughtful and anxious, but there was rather a triumphant tone in his manner which jarred with his words. "Have you cherished any expectations from your uncle since his death? Answer me, if you will, as a friend."

"I have half guessed the possibility of the time coming when there might be something; but I have regarded it as a remote contingency."

"You did well, my dear boy, you did well. I have been this afternoon with poor Hammerton's brother, who is in Greenland's house; he declines all responsibility, and the bank will not open on Monday morning. I cannot advise my partners to undertake it; though I think the speculation

might be a good one as regards connection. There is a West End house that is likely to do so, so that every shilling in the pound will be paid; but, beyond that, there is not money to bury him."

Charlie's face fell, as what man's would not? He had told Roger Palmer the truth, he had counted on nothing; yet he had sometimes thought that a few thousands only out of that business might have smoothed the way for his marriage, or have given a few more of its comforts to his Edith. Roger Palmer's face, however, wore no such sympathetic expression as might have been expected.

"And there was no will?"

"No will, but a sort of trust deed in my hands, to be used in your favour, as far as Henry Thornhill's interest in that house could be so, at Mr. Hammerton's death. Had your uncle or Mr. Hammerton lived a few years longer, you might have been a rich man; but God has willed it otherwise."

"Then, sir, we must manage as well as we can without. And now, will you give me the explanation you promised?"

"I will. Some few years after your uncle bought, with his younger brother's portion, a share in Hammerton's bank, a terrible crisis arrived, which ruined half the bankers in England. Indian affairs were the origin of the panic, and the extent to which speculation had been carried in that country. Few remained firm; and by one house alone your uncle lost 200,000*l*. I need hardly say that it takes a long time to get that back. Assistance from private sources was all they could hope for, as the trade was too much crippled to do much for one another. Since that day your uncle and Hammerton have never been solvent; but their business was so good that a few years would have made them so. A private meeting was called, of which I formed one, to consult on the advisability of closing the house, to the certain ruin of hundreds, or of going on with every prospect of

paying twenty shillings in the pound, and saving their own reputation. The latter was determined upon, and to-morrow morning every one will be paid in full, but Hammerton's will have ceased to exist for ever." The old man drew a long and deep sigh, as if an old and familiar friend had disappointed him by dying, and then finished his Madeira in silence.

"Shall I ring for the lamp?" asked Charlie, the twilight having deepened perceptibly during the explanation.

"Not yet, Charles Thornhill. I've a word more to say. Do you know that Thornhills is in the market still?"

"I do: an order was forwarded by my brother last year from Malta to have it disposed of, at a price, just as we had persuaded him not to sell it, but to let us find a tenant for it, if possible. We have not yet had a customer: I hardly think we have honestly tried."

"Do you know the price, and the conditions of sale?"

"No; but they can easily be had from our man of business, Mr. Mason."

"I do," said Roger Palmer—"75,000*l.*, and the timber at a valuation. How long has it been in your family? Help yourself, my dear Thornhill."

"Since 1672." Charlie sighed a most genuine sigh of regret.

"Would it do for me?"

"It's a larger place than you would care to live in, but very beautiful."

"Perhaps my heir might like that as well as the port wine." The old man seemed mightily tickled by the joke, considering it was not so pleasant a subject to Charlie.

"I should be very happy to think that she did. She's one of the kindest and best wives or mothers I ever heard of."

In one moment Roger Palmer was on his legs: it was something too dark to see his face, which was whiter than ever with surprise: in his sudden rise he upset his own wine, and half spilt

the glass to which Charlie had so lately helped himself.

"She?—she?" said the old man, almost shouting till the room rang again. "Who told you it was a she? Where did you learn such a story? I see: from your Uncle Henry. And how do you know anything about her?"

"It was my Uncle Henry, I think, or perhaps Lady Marston. But I saw them at Frankfort, struggling against poverty and sickness; and I'm only glad you have the means of rescuing a good woman and her daughter from their stings."

I think that bottle of port must have done something for Charlie.

"No, Charles Thornhill, never! It's no Kildonald, who stole her from me, shall have my money. She liked him, loved him, better than the hands that had worked for her, and the bosom that had warned her; she made her own bed, let her lie on it."

The old man spoke very cruelly, and Charlie

interrupted him: "But, Mr. Palmer, you forget——"

"I forget nothing: it is because I can't forget. Not a word more, Charles, my boy. You, sir, you are my heir. You shall have Thornhills, and thousands and thousands besides." The old man resumed his seat, and as he drank off a fresh glass of Madeira he became quieter. "There, ring the bell, Thornhill, for the lamp. We're in darkness, groping our way; let's have some light upon it." Charlie did so, and the light came.

The declaration of the miser had so astonished him that he sat for some minutes unable to say a word, even of thanks, much less of repudiation. Images of all sorts flocked into his mind, and bewildered him. He thought there was something he ought to do, but it wanted a struggle to do it. At length Roger Palmer spoke again:

"The thing is already done. I've made you my heir. I owe all I have to your father. He saved the whole house from ruin and myself

from beggary and disgrace. Now, will you have Thornhills, or shall I try some more tempting investment for you?"

"My dear sir," said Charlie, rising, with the tears in his eyes, and walking towards Roger Palmer, "I need hardly tell you what you have done for me. If there is anything in the world I can do for you to give you pleasure but this, tell me. But I can't take Thornhills; there's something tells me I can't. And then, think of poor Tom."

"I have thought of Tom, more than he ever thought for himself; but don't say no: not to-night. You owe me something. Repay it by an act of obedience. Be my son. I never had one; but I could have wished him like you."

"You overpower me, sir; indeed you do. There are many considerations. Give me time. The temptation you put before me is too great."

"Then take time, boy: this day week. In the meantime make Mason promise me the

refusal of the estate. Good-night. God bless you!"

Charlie went out into the clear, warm night. He lit a cigar; and as he walked to Grosvenor Place he had plenty to think of.

It was the end of the season. The House was tired out; the eloquence of Gladstone and the satire of Horsman failed to attract attention. The last *déjeûner* had been given at Richmond, the last dinner at Blackwall. Lumley had closed his house, and Rachel was gone back to Paris. Even the clerks in Goldbury were going up and down to Broadstairs and Margate; and the grouse on a hundred hills were counting the hours of their probable existence. Sir Frederick and Lady Marston were taking their last dinner previous to turning their backs upon drought and solitude, made manifest by the half-dozen carriages that still remained in town. He was in better spirits than usual, as he led his wife down stairs apologising for his want of punctuality.

"The fact is, my dear, I've been detained on rather pressing business by old Roger Palmer, of whom you've heard."

"And whom I've seen, Fred. And what had he to say?"

"That Thornhills was sold at last."

"To whom, if it's not an impertinent question, Fred?"

"He's bought it himself."

"It's somewhat large for his wants. Does he mean to live there?"

"It's not for himself; he has already made a present of it to another."

"To our friend Charlie? I thought you told me he steadily refused to accept it." Lady Marston seemed less astonished than she ought to have been.

"Excepting upon conditions: with which Roger Palmer has complied."

"And they are?"

"An allowance to the Kildonalds, which shall place them in comfortable circumstances; and a

legacy of 20,000*l.* at his death. It was all he could manage to do for them; the old man would do no more."

"And Tom Thornhill?"

"Wrote a week ago a letter, such as few men but himself could write, urging, praying, his acceptance of the generous provision, and declaring it the only means by which he could be relieved from the constant and unavailing regrets for the disappointments he had brought on them all."

"And Roger Palmer himself, is he going to die?" said the lady, smiling.

"Not of starvation, certainly: for there's a handsome annuity payable out of the estate to him, more than adequate to all his wants."

"And do you approve of all this, Frederick?"

Sir Frederick looked up from his plate, and saw so bright a twinkle in his lady's eyes, and so absolute an absence of all astonishment, that he began to feel a little disappointed.

"Why! Kate——"

"My dear."

"You knew of this before?"

"I've heard a little about it, certainly. Charlie was here the day before yesterday; he came to see you; and he couldn't help saying something about it to me. He was in terrible distress; and —I hope you're not jealous, but you know you never are at home, so—I—just—ventured to—advise."

"My love," said the baronet, walking solemnly round the table, and stooping to kiss the tears from his wife's eyes, which began fairly to run over, "I knew how honest and generous and good you were, but I never knew what a counsellor I had so near home, or I might have saved myself many a weary hour. When I want to know how to do right, Kate, I shall come to you."

When Sir Frederick and Lady Marston read Tom's last letter over, one expression much perplexed them. "I never knew," he wrote, "until she was gone, how much I could do for

her memory which I failed to do for herself. My life is passed in retirement. And from the day that the fatal announcement met my eye I have lived on the consolation that if she saw me now she would have no cause to blush for her unworthy preference."

The following spring the Dacres returned to England. Their first visitor was Charlie. He met them in Paris, and returned to London with them. They had but little to learn of his improved fortunes, as Charles Thornhill was too glad to communicate his happiness to trust to surprises. When Edith Dacre walked down the steps of St George's, Hanover Square, a happy bride, she had known for some few months that Thornhills was to be her home.

"Well!" said Lady Montagu Mastodon, looking at the bridegroom, as he stuttered and stammered his acknowledgments, "a man may not know the difference between Niger and Nigger, and yet get through the world remarkably well. He's not the Dunce of the Family."

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

"Exeunt omnes."—*Old Play.*

We have very nearly finished. Indeed, to have landed our hero and his bride safely in the family domain, and to have shuffled off his brother to Alexandria or Cairo seems to be about as much as the most exacting could require. It was from the former of those places that Tom's last letters were dated; and for the next three years he was only heard of at long intervals. He spoke of returning to England for a time, and looked forward to catching a glimpse of his brother's happiness, which was now complete. That gentleman, indeed, seemed to be made for enjoyment; and when Mrs. Charles Thornhill presented him with a son and heir his exultation was far beyond all proportion to the event. He

had his troubles, however. He was very desirous of exchanging the cares of a banking-house and the onerous duties of a foreign correspondence for the responsibilities of a country gentleman. There ought to be a resident landlord at Thornhills, and the estate and his little additions to it would well support it. Besides, London was not to his taste. There was one claim, however, greater than those of Thornhills and his own inclinations—that of Roger Palmer; and for the old man to have seen his *protégé* turning back from the golden furrows in which he was ploughing would have broken his heart. While, therefore, he rented a small house in Belgravia, he contented himself with running backwards and forwards as often as time would permit.

"Some day," thought he, "we shall all find ourselves at Thornhills again. Let my mother have it till then; and we must be her guests." His wife was more beautiful than ever: marriage had wonderfully improved her, as it does most people. It strengthens the weak, confirms the

unstable, softens asperities, and teaches us to bear and forbear. It is an universal panacea, the offspring of affection and hope, and the parent of perpetual sunshine and self-denial.

At length Tom Thornhill was heard of, and in a way that few could have conceived possible. About the beginning of the third summer after Charlie's marriage a book appeared in London on the drawing-room table of most persons who have any regard for their reputations as to literature. It was not light literature, and yet it was as fit for a drawing-room table as elsewhere. It was not a religious book. It neither dealt in polemical divinity nor abstruse speculation; yet there was a tone of seriousness running through it which told of deeper thoughts than those which usually force themselves to the surface on the streams of fashionable society. It was not cheerless, nor egoistical, but it was easy to detect a wound unhealed through the flimsy veil of adventure which the writer had thrown over it. At all events, "Uranothen" obtained a deserved

and decided success, and men of learning and research, as well as women of taste and education, united in unqualified admiration of the author. And this was Tom Thornhill. And everybody read it. Those who did not know him were delighted; those who did scarcely believed their senses. The Marstons read it, and the Mastodons; the Robinson Browns, and the Dacres. It was read in fine bindings, in one volume, in three, in railway stations, and in Elizabethan parsonages, and always with something of approbation and sympathy. The East is a favourite subject with most men; and there was then much untrodden ground, which required a delicate and trembling foot to traverse it. And there was one who read it, and who dropped tears of genuine love and sympathy and pity, and in all her own regrets felt happier that he was learning to forget them.

It was a beautiful winter's morning after Christmas, and Charlie and his wife were at Thornhills. There was no one with them but his mother and Mary Stanhope; and as the

hounds were meeting at the bottom of one of his own covers, about three miles distant, he desired his groom to take his horses on, as Mrs. Charles Thornhill would take him to cover in the carriage. In a few minutes Edith arrived, ready to give the Squire his breakfast, and ignorant of the new arrangement made for her. To a stranger she had the happy, joyous smile of early womanhood, though she led her second child, a little girl of two years old or more, by the hand: to an old acquaintance she had gained in loveliness by the loss of that over-buoyant joyousness for which she was so remarkable some years before.

"You'll have to put your bonnet on, Edith, after breakfast: I've ordered the carriage for you." Charlie was buckling on his spur as he spoke.

"There goes my favourite ottoman. Do look, Charlie, your spur has caught the work, and almost pulled out the child's eye."

"Oh! I beg your pardon, dear. It will easily sew up with a bit of brown silk."

"It's not so easy to sew up, as you call it, with brown silk. Look, sir, at the mischief you have done."

Charlie picked up the baby, for the time being, who was staring with open eyes, and wondering whether mamma and papa were really quarrelling, as she and brother Geoffrey did occasionally.

"How sorry I am: now for the breakfast. Where's the mother, Edith, and the rest of the royal family? Don't forget that you have to dress."

"Why didn't you tell me that upstairs. I shall have to alter my hair."

"Then I certainly wouldn't do that," said Charlie, laughing at his wife's excuses; "and I'll ring and tell them to saddle my hack."

"What! are you going to cover in the carriage?" The whole manner was changed: alacrity and good-humour and a blush that might have sat on a maiden cheek lighted up his wife's face as he said—

"Of course I am, if you and——"

"Oh, charming! There's your tea. We shan't be a minute." The door opened again and again, and in a few minutes the family party were busily engaged at breakfast.

The fact is that "dear Edith" was a little disappointed. There had been a discussion in the dressing-room as to the propriety of her riding on horseback to the meet. Charlie had put a prudential and very decided negative upon it; and although the most indulgent of husbands, when he made up his mind that he was right, he usually stuck to it.

The cover near which the hounds met was a hanging wood, with the river running rapidly below it. An open country, of a most formidable character to cross, stretched away in deep grass meadows on the opposite side. In fact it was *the* vale *par excellence* of that part of England; and, we all know what that means. Heavy galloping, rasping ox-fences, and water, on its way to the never-ending streams of ocean. It was a fortunate circumstance that foxes were not

fond of facing the river; as a rule they broke up hill, or threaded the side of the stream without crossing. I say fortunate, not because I object to the excitement of a stiff vale, but because a stranger in that country, as I am, not knowing the exact spot to hit the ford—and there was but one just about Thorneycrofts—would be pretty certain to see the run from the hill without participating in it. The ford was on the right of the cover, and the only other chance of passing the stream was by a rustic bridge in the grounds of a gentleman at least two miles distant. Thus much is necessary to understand what took place on the day in question.

The hounds were no sooner in cover than they spoke to their fox: in a minute they were running him along the side of the hill, whilst the horsemen were hallooed back to give him room to break. A fox is very timid or very bold; on this occasion he was an incomprehensible anomaly, for, catching sight of the scarlet feather in Mrs. Thornhill's hat, whose coachman, to tell

the truth, was a trifle too forward for real sport, but only bent upon getting the best start possible, Reynard turned short to the left, went straight down the hill, and in one moment was swimming the river at its deepest part. Now, I should have faced Mrs. Charles Thornhill with much better courage than the river.

The first along the road to pass the carriage was Charlie Thornhill; and he was not long in turning short through the gate at the top of the cover, and galloping through it towards the point where he heard Will Goodchild's cheerful "Gone away!" As he emerged from the wood on the sloping meadows below, he saw the body of the pack stemming the current, and the leading hounds already dragging themselves up to the hollow banks, and shaking their sterns hastily before they settled to the scent. For a moment he contemplated swimming, but a recollection of the banks opposite deterred him: he had once been very nearly drowned in an attempt to do so. He turned, therefore, as quick as thought towards

the ford. A quarter of a mile away he could just see the gate that led out of the meadow towards it, and by which he knew the exact spot by which to hit it. "Not a soul with them," said he to himself. "What a pity! and such a scent in cover. By Jove! there is, though: and somebody who knows the country. How the deuce did he get there?" for at that moment a horseman emerged from the waters, and made straight for the only practicable place in the stiffest bullfinch in the country. Charlie watched him as he held on his own way, hopeless of catching and hopeful only of nicking them; while behind him thundered the field, a few of whom only contemplated the pleasing prospect of sticking to his skirts in hope of a place. "Well done!" said the Master. "Who is it, Thornhill? Don't override them, sir, whatever you do." He might as well have been hallooing to the sun at noonday. They persevered as men will persevere, if any one is fool enough to encourage, without seeing or hearing a hound, or even knowing in

what direction they are running. They were not so hopelessly stranded as all that: the Master and Charlie kept on; the huntsman was a little to their left, slightly in advance, and Will Goodchild, having seen as many of his hounds out of cover as he thought orthodox, was in the thick of it. "There they go; look at the beauties; 'Gad! what a head they carry. We shall never catch them. And there's that man in the black coat; d—— it, how he's overriding them."

I don't think he was; but it was enough to make even a Master of Hounds swear. For a quarter of an hour they had been flying: a stern chase is proverbially a long one: the horses, a little short of condition after a frost, were beginning to feel it; and a few casualties had already taken place when they had so far overhauled them as to be within view of the hounds and the black-coated man, who continued to hold his own as very few men can. He was a tall, graceful man, with great power over his horse evidently, by the way in which he rode him. He

swerved neither to the right nor the left, but sailed along (the pack quite under his command, whichever way they might turn). "It's Jim Mason," said one. "It's that confounded parson from Stickbury," said another. "No it's not; look at that fellow, he's a bigger man: besides, I think he has a beard." However, they were not more than two fields behind: one strong post and rails separted them: a nick would soon satisfy their curiosity. Their hopes rose. "He has a beard;" the front rank men of the ruck can almost see it. At that moment the leading hounds headed short up to the right, and almost before the field could acknowledge the turn, certainly before some of them could steady their horses, the hounds, the stranger, and all were over the brow of the hill, and had once more disappeared from sight.

In the meantime the carriage had been hunting the fox, as ladies will hunt him, against all hope. The coachman, too, was an enthusiast, and not a bad pilot. So they went down one lane

and up another, over a piece of turf, and then through a farmyard—in fact, in the most mysterious holes and corners, now stopping to listen, then making a spurt, until they reached, in a roundabout manner, the ornamental bridge aforesaid. "If we don't see 'em here, ma'am, we shan't hear nothing of 'em again." So Jehu pulled up, and sat still. He had been sitting, perhaps, five or six minutes, when he rose on his coach-box. At that moment he was joined by his master's second horseman, who, seeing the impossibility of catching them by following over the ford, had come round by this bridge. "Ride on, Jim, and look if you can see anything of 'em." Jim had been gone a minute, when he reappeared, and began beckoning to the coachman to come on. "They're close here, running like blazes, and only one gent with 'em: it ain't master, he's got a black coat." At that moment the hounds came down the grass field at the same pace, while the fence at the top opened, and crash through an ox-fence came the single horse-

man in close attendance. Down he came, with all his might, towards the gateway near to which the carriage was drawn up. He never raised his head nor checked his horse till he got close upon it; then he looked up, pulled his horse into a walk, and put out his crop to unhasp the gate leading towards the bridge and buildings by which they had come in.

Edith was not alone in the carriage. But she was standing up in her excitement and watching the hounds as they took the fence, crashing through the broken underwood with that dash which distinguishes a foxhound from all other animals. She suddenly heard her name sharply called by the beautiful girl who sat beside her, and looking down, she saw that every spark of colour had left her cheek.

"Edith, Edith, look; pray look, dearest!"

"Yes, yes; I see. Charming! beautiful! isn't it? But where's the field?"

"Did you see him? Tell me, did you? Surely you didn't know of this?"

"See him. See what?—that horrid man with the beard, who seems to have had the best of it to-day? Charlie 'll be horridly savage, dear: it's the only thing that ever puts him out of temper."

"That was Tom Thornhill, Edith, if ever I saw him in my life."

"My darling child, he's in Alexandria. You're dreaming."

"No, dear, I'm not dreaming. That *is* Tom Thornhill."

"Alice!! Home, William, as fast as you can go."

You see Alice was not dead—never had been dead. Her aunt, godmother, and namesake was dead; which was but natural, seeing she was about seventy years of age, being very much older than her brother, Mr. Dacre of Gilsland. In fact, polite old women—and she was a polite old lady—feeling that they lose their good looks about that age, make a point of going. If Tom Thornhill's eyes had not been blinded by tears, or had he looked again the next day, he would

have seen that this lady died in Bruton Street instead of at Florence or Gilsland.

They waited patiently enough; but neither mentioned his name. Two; three; four. At half-past four a step, an unmistakeable step, was heard upon the stairs: the door opened, and a much-damaged hat, very watery-looking boots, and a well-splashed scarlet coat entered. He stood a moment; his wife jumped up and ran towards him; but he shut the door, and placed his back against it.

"He's there, Charlie; I know he is," said the lively little woman, struggling in the arms of the giant.

"He! Who? What do you mean? Be quiet. Down, tigress; down."

"Who? Why, Tom. *My* brother Tom; he's my brother now. Let him come in. Tom, Tom!"

"He can't come in; he's covered with mud. Don't you see Alice is here?"

"Is he worse than you? You've been at the bottom of the Sludge. He shall come in."

Charlie stood on one side—the door opened—and there, once more in the full blaze of day, stood Tom Thornhill and Alice Dacre face to face. Charlie and his wife somehow suddenly disappeared.

Tom before very long was seen in town buying carriage-horses and furniture. He is as good a fellow as ever, and a better man. He has made a name for himself, a higher and more honourable one than that which he destroyed. He has suffered, and others have suffered with him. Adversity has done for him what prosperity never did for any. Amidst all his regrets he has but one remaining—that he should ever have caused a pang to his Alice. She declares herself amply rewarded for it all. Tom has been known to speak with some vanity of that thirty minutes, to say nothing of its results. And, though University men have often heard of such things, I believe Tom Thornhill is the only man who ever rode a run entirely to the exclusion of the rest of the field.

Amidst all the wishes for the happiness of our beloved Prince and his Bride, which were showered upon the Royal Pair on the 10th of March, 1863, there were none more sincere and few more largehearted than the health that was drunk at Thornhills. "And Tom, old fellow," said the Dunce of the Family, at the conclusion of a very uncommon burst of eloquence, "may he only be as happy as we are!"

THE END.

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